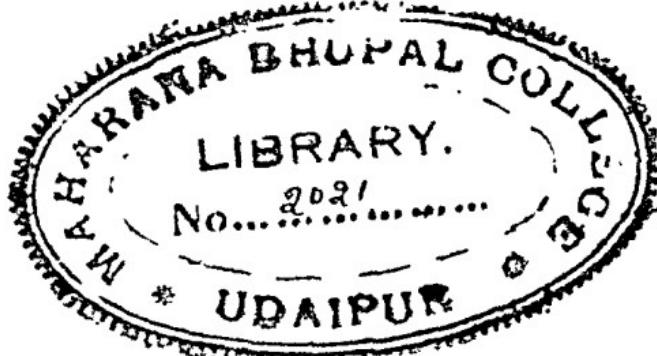


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THE DIVINE COMEDY  
OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

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# THE DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

A translation in English  
*terza-rima* verse by

MELVILLE B. ANDERSON



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
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DANTE ALIGHIERI

Born at Florence sometime between mid-May and mid-June,	
1265.	
Died at Ravenna	14 September 1321
Earliest known manuscript of the poem	1336
First printed texts (three in number)	1472

*The present translation was first published in 1921 and included in  
'The World's Classics' in 1933.*

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*To*

PAGET TOYNBEE

M.A., D.LITT., LL.D.

*Honorary Fellow of Balliol College  
Corresponding Member of the R. Accademia  
della Crusca, of the R. Istituto Lombardo di  
Scienze e Lettere, and of the R. Accademia di  
Lucca, Fellow of the British Academy*

THIS EDITION IS GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED BY THE

TRANSLATOR

*It was after I had corrected the last proof-sheets of this book that news reached me of the death of Paget Toynbee. The dedication is left just as he had accepted it, although it falls short of duly acknowledging his service to a work of which he may be called, in one sense of the famous phrase, ‘the onlie begetter’. To his recommendation is due the inclusion of my version of the Divina Commedia among the ‘World’s Classics’, and he took the place of the distant author in patiently supervising the long process of producing the book. With the concluding labour of this task he was busied on the eleventh of May, and the thirteenth was the last day of his life. Others, more competent, will appraise his eminent scholarship and noble character; I would here only express grief in the loss of a wise friend and helper. The influence of such a life remains untouched by mortality.*

M. B. A.

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA,

June, 1932.

## PREFATORY NOTE

WITH respect to the writings of Dante we suffer much the same disadvantage as with respect to the ancient classics. Not a scrap of manuscript from his hand is known to exist. The works attributed to him by tradition have to be judged by their style and substance. The text of his great poem as it now lies before the reader is made up from the collation of hundreds of manuscripts written by persons of varying degrees of culture and accuracy throughout the long century and a half between his death and the appearance of the first printed copy. Chaucer's whimsical lines to Adam, 'his owne scriveynce', are illuminating evidence of the constant vigilance which had to be exercised by the medieval author lest his meaning be perverted by his copyist. Much more dangerous than the negligent and hasty scribe was he who, being a 'clerc' presumed himself a critic, and undertook to improve the language of the poet. Other causes contributed to the gradual corruption of the text, as for example the circumstance that before the time of Aldus Manutius, there was no real system of punctuation. The 'long study and great love' of generations of scholars have been required to remove obscurities, correct erroneous readings, and solve perplexing problems. It may be conjectured with a certain degree of confidence that the reader of *The Divine Comedy* is to-day perplexed and distracted by fewer difficulties of the text than is the reader of the plays of Shakespeare. Cruxes and disputed readings still remain, some of them doubtless due to the fact that the poet at times chose to speak in riddles. Three modern texts, varying indeed in many details, may now be accepted as happily embodying the poetry of Dante: (1) the Florentine 'Testo Critico' (1921); (2) that of Professor Casella, printed in England by the Nonesuch Press; (3) that of Moore and Toynbee in the 'Oxford Dante'. The fourth edition of the last, as revised by the surviving editor, Dr. Paget Toynbee, is here reprinted under the supervision

of Dr. Toynbee himself. In the infrequent cases where the translator has chosen to vary from the Oxford reading, Dr. Toynbee has brought the text<sup>1</sup> into harmony with the translation. All such cases are recorded in the notes. Full elucidation of all references in a poem which might almost be called an abstract and summary of a whole era of human experience, would make a body of notes so voluminous as to defeat their purpose. Readers who find the present notes insufficient may confidently be referred to the *Concise Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante* by Paget Toynbee.

This translation, which was first published in 1921, now appears in a final redaction. Of the total number of lines in the poem (14233) many hundreds (possibly a tenth of the whole) have been recast.

M. B. A.

February, 1932.

<sup>1</sup> In the edition with the Italian text, 'World's Classics', Nos. 392-4.

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# INFERNO

*'Molte volte al fatto il dir vien meno'*

Inferno iv. 147

## CANTO I

### *Proem: Rescue of Dante by Virgil*

- 1 Midway the path of life that men pursue  
I found me in a darkling wood astray,  
for the direct way had been lost to view.
- 4 Ah me, how hard a thing it is to say  
what was this thorny wildwood intricate  
whose memory renews the first dismay!
- 7 Scarcely in death is bitterness more great:  
but as concerns the good discovered there  
the other things I saw will I relate.
- 10 How there I entered I am unaware,  
so was I at that moment full of sleep  
when I abandoned the true thoroughfare.
- 13 But when I reached the bottom of a steep  
ending the valley which had overcome  
my courage, piercing me with fear so deep,
- 16 Lifting mine eyes up, I beheld its dome  
already covered with that planet's light  
which along all our pathways leads us home.
- 19 Then was a little quieted the fright  
that had been lurking in the heart of me  
throughout the passage of the pitous night.
- 22 And like to one who, panting weakly  
forth from the deep, at last his safety seeing,  
turns to the perilous water musingly,
- 25 So did my mind, which even yet was fleeing,  
turn back to view the pass that nevermore  
has left alive a single human being.
- 28 Having a little eased my body sore,  
along the solitary slope I plied  
so that the firm foot ever was the lower.
- 31 And lo! where but begins the mountainside,  
a leopard light and very swift of pace  
and covered with a gaily spotted hide.
- 34 Never withdrew she from before my face;  
nay, rather blocked she so my going on  
that oft I turned my footing to retrace.

*The three Beasts*

- 37 It was about the moment of the dawn;  
    uprose the sun and paled the light benign  
        of those fair stars which were beside him yon
- 40 When took they motion first from Love Divine:  
    so the sweet season and the time of day  
        caused me to augur as a hopeful sign
- 43 That animal with skin bedappled gay:  
    yet not so much but that I felt dismayed  
        to see a lion intercept my way.
- 46 It seemed to me that he toward me made  
    with head erected and with hunger raving,  
        so that the very air appeared afraid:
- 49 And a she-wolf, made gaunt by every craving  
    wherewith methought she heavy-laden went,  
        and much folk hitherto of joy bereaving;
- 52 She brought on me so much discouragement  
    by terror of her aspect that perforce  
        I forfeited all hope of the ascent.
- 55 And as one, interrupted in his course  
    of winning, when his fortune is undone  
        is full of perturbation and remorse,
- 58 That truceless beast made me such malison,  
    and coming on against me pace by pace  
        baffled me back where silent is the sun.
- 61 While I was falling back to that low place,  
    a being was made present to my ken  
        who through long silence seemed in feeble case.
- 64 Seeing that figure in the desert glen,  
    'Have pity upon me!' I imploring cried,  
        'whether thou be of shades or real men.'
- 67 'Not man,—a man once was I,' he replied,  
    'my parents both were born at Mantua,  
        and were of Lombard blood on either side.
- 70 *Sub Julio* was I born, though late the day,  
    and under good Augustus lived at Rome  
        when false and lying deities bore sway.
- 73 I was a poet: that just hero whom  
    Anchises sired, I sang, who came from Troy  
        after the burning of proud Ilium.

- 76 But why dost thou return to such annoy,  
wherefore ascend not the delightful Mount,  
beginning and occasion of all joy?'  
79 'Art thou indeed that Virgil, and that fount  
whence pours of eloquence so broad a stream?'  
I made reply to him with bashful front.  
82 'O of the other poets light supreme,  
may the long study now my warrant be,  
and the great love that made thy book my theme.  
85 Thou art my Master and my Authority,  
and thou alone art he from whom I've taken  
the goodly style that has done grace to me.  
88 Behold the beast for whom I have forsaken  
the forward course: assist me, famous sage,  
for look! my veins and pulses all are shaken.'  
91 'Another journey must thy steps engage,'  
when he beheld me weeping, did he say,  
'wouldst from this savage place make pilgrimage;  
94 Because this beast whereat thou criest, gives way  
never to any comer, but doth sore  
impede and harass him until she slay.  
97 Malignant is she so that nevermore  
the craving of her appetite is fed,  
and after food is hungrier than before.  
100 Many are the animals that with her wed,  
and there shall yet be more, until the Hound  
shall come and in her misery strike her dead.  
103 His food shall not be either pelf or ground  
but what is loving, wise, and valorous:  
Feltro and Feltro shall his nation bound.  
106 That humble Italy preserves he thus  
for which the maid Camilla bit the dust,  
Turnus and Nisus and Euryalus;  
109 And out of every city shall he thrust  
that beast, until he drive her back to Hell  
whence she was first let loose by envious lust.  
112 Wherefore for thee I think and judge it well  
thou follow me, and I will bring about  
thy passage thither where the eternal dwell.

- 115 There shalt thou hearken the despairing shout,  
shalt see the souls of yore, each woe<sup>ful</sup> guest  
who craving for the second death cries out.
- 118 Shalt see thereaster those who are at rest  
amid the flame, because their wishes bend  
to make them, whensoever, of the blest.
- 121 If then to these thou wishest to ascend,  
for this a worthier soul than I shall wait,  
and with her will I leave thee at the end:
- 124 Because that Emperor who there holds state  
seeing I was a rebel to His law,  
wills that through me none pass His city-gate.
- 127 There rules His love, as everywhere His awe;  
there in His capital He sits on high:  
happy His chosen who may nigh Him draw!
- 130 'O Poet, I entreat of thee,' said I,  
'by that Divinity thou didst not know,  
so this and greater evil I may fly,
- 133 That where thou saidst I may a pilgrim go,  
and led by thee Saint Peter's portal find,  
and those thou makest out afflicted so.'
- 136 Then moved he on, I following behind.

## NOTES

*Time: Morning of Good Friday of the Jubilee year, 1300, Dante being midway to three-score and ten.*

*Place: The 'wandering wood of this life', where Dante comes to himself from that sleep which is spiritual death. To understand the Poet one must 'go into the poet's country',—a country where all material things and transitory wants are looked at sub specie eternitatis. Dante himself is at once an individual and a type of humanity erring, repenting, winning salvation. Virgil is at once the poet whom Dante most admired and the type of human wisdom (philosophy). Beatrice is at once the woman whom Dante loved and the mouthpiece of Divine wisdom (theology). Earth is still the centre of the universe; the sun is a larger planet; astronomy is hardly distinguished from astrology.*

ll. 1-3. The proper comment would be chapters 23 and 24 of the Fourth Book of the Convivio, where human life is likened to an arch rising to its apex in the thirty-fifth year and thence descending to the period fixed by the Psalmist. As Dante, the protagonist of his own Poem, was born in 1265, he is now thirty-five, the year that is the key-stone of the arch.

The first word of the third line would be 'where' (in which) if the Oxford text were here followed. l. 3. Oxford text reads *che*.

l. 20. The rhyme-scheme here compels the translator to omit the striking image, 'the lake of the heart'.

l. 30. But that this line has been discussed so much, it would seem superfluous to remark that this is the Poet's way of saying that he is gradually ascending. In going up hill the bodily weight rests upon whichever foot is standing still below the one which is being thrust forward.

ll. 31-58. Just what sins the three beasts typify is disputed. Elsewhere in the Poem the wolf is the type of avarice, by which Dante means all forms of selfish advantage at the expense of others. It is the sin which he most frequently stigmatizes; obviously, therefore, the allegory here cannot be merely personal. If the leopard symbolizes lust, the lion pride, the wolf avarice, the correspondence is sufficiently plain with the grand division of sins in Canto xi into sins of Incontinence, of Violence, and of Fraud.

ll. 38-40. The sun was placed in the sign of the Ram (Aries) at the Creation, and rises now accompanied by the

same stars. At Eastertide all nature rises with the risen God; the vernal equinox is the true beginning, not only of the year, but of all things. Our Chaucer afterwards chose the same date for his pilgrimage to Canterbury, when 'the yonge Sonne Hath in the Ram his halfe cors yronne'.

*l. 48.* Cf. Shakespeare's *Henry the Fifth*, Chorus I, lines 12-14; and Tennyson's *Godiva*.

*l. 79.* Dante's choice of Virgil as his guide is a noble instance of that humanity which is above all creeds. The Roman poet is made the type of human reason and he therefore retires, in the Earthly Paradise, in favour of Beatrice who typifies 'the good of intellect', i.e., the knowledge of God.

*ll. 101-11.* The Hound is to be a great national deliverer, such as Dante at one time hoped Henry of Luxemburg would be. Here he seems to have in mind Can Grande della Scala, but the reference is purposely vague. There is a town Feltre on the Piave and the famous castle of Montefeltro was in the mountains of the Romagna. Torracca does not capitalize the initial letters of these words (*feltro e feltro*). Taking 'nazio[n]' in the primary sense of nativity, the meaning would be, 'his birth shall be between felt and felt'. It is explained that felt was used for fine cushions and rugs, so that the Poet is prophesying a deliverer 'born in the purple'. Casella, whose critical text is made accessible to English readers in the edition of the Nonesuch Press, follows this reading, as does Passerini in the monumental edition printed at Florence in 1911 (Olschki).

*l. 117.* Probably annihilation is meant. But see Book of Revelation xx. 6 and 14, and xxi. 8.

## CANTO II

*Virgil describes the Appeal of Beatrice*

- 1 Day was departing and the dusky air  
  loosing the living things on earth that dwell  
    from their fatigues; and I alone was there
- 4 Preparing to sustain the war, as well  
  of the long way as also of the pain,  
    which now unerring memory will tell.
- 7 O Muses! O high Genius, now sustain!  
  O Memory who wrote down what I did see,  
    here thy nobility will be made plain.
- 10 Now I began: 'Poet who guidest me,  
  look to my worth if it be plenteous,  
    ere to the hard pass thou confidest me.'
- 13 Thou tellest that the Sire of Silvius  
  went to the everlasting world, while still  
    corruptible, and in the body thus.
- 16 But that the Adversary of every ill  
  should grace him so, viewing the issue high  
    and who he was and what he should fulfill,
- 19 Seems not unfit to the understanding eye:  
  for he was father of imperial Rome  
    elected in the empyrean sky,
- 22 Founding that city and her masterdom  
  in sooth, for see and sanctuary blest  
    of those who after greatest Peter come.
- 25 And by that going, which thou honourest,  
  he heard of things whereon were consequent  
    his victory and then the Papal Vest.
- 28 There afterward the Chosen Vessel went  
  thence bringing comfort to that Faith supreme  
    which of salvation is the rudiment.
- 31 But wherfore I? Who grants me such a dream?  
  Æneas am I not, nor am I Paul,  
    nor to myself or others worthy seem.
- 34 Whence, if I dare to yield me to thy call,  
  I tremble lest the going prove insane:  
    my words are to the wise,—thou knowest all.'

10      *The Blessed Spirit appeals to the Castaway*

- 37 And like to those who chop and change again  
on second thoughts, unwilling former will,  
and make their fair beginning wholly vain,
- 40 Such became I on that benighted hill:  
since, taking thought, I cancelled the emprise  
I was before so eager to fulfill.
- 43 'If I have comprehended thy replies,'  
returned that shadow of the lofty mind,  
'thy soul in caitiff apprehension lies,
- 46 Which oftentimes so baffles humankind,  
they turn like animal false sight perceiving,  
leaving emprise of honour all behind.
- 49 To free thee from this timid misconceiving,  
let me now tell thee what my coming meant,  
and what I heard of thee that set me grieving.
- 52 I was with those who are in Limbo pent,  
when a fair Lady from the blest abode  
called me, and her command was my consent.
- 55 More brilliant than the star her glances glowed;  
and gently and serenely she began  
with voice angelic, in her own sweet mode:
- 58 "O courteous shade, soul of the Mantuan  
whose fame endures to-day in human ear,  
and will endure as long as motion can,
- 61 One dear to me and not to fortune dear,  
is on the desert hillside in his way  
so hindered that he has turned back for fear,
- 64 And may, alas! be now so far astray  
that I am risen for his relief too late,  
from what I hear the Heavenly voices say.
- 67 Now go, and with thine eloquence ornate,  
and what may serve for his escape from woe,  
aid him, lest I should be disconsolate.
- 70 Myself am Beatrice who bid thee go;  
thence come I whither to return I sigh;  
love prompted me and makes me urge thee so.
- 73 When I shall be before my Lord on high  
I will speak often to Him in thy praise."
- Thereat she paused, and I began reply:

- 76 "O Lady by virtue of whom the human race  
doth in nobility all things excel  
within the Heaven that rounds the smallest space,  
79 To do thy bidding pleases me so well  
the deed were laggard if already done:  
there is no further need thy wish to tell.  
82 But tell me rather why thou dost not shun  
descending to this centre from the sphere  
so wide, whereto thou burnest to be gone."  
85 "Seeing it is thy will so far to peer,  
I will proceed to tell thee," she replied,  
"why I am not afraid to enter here.  
88 Of those things only fear is justified  
wherin is power of harming less or much:  
at nothing else need one be terrified.  
91 By Grace Divine have I been fashioned such  
that pangs me not the misery of you,  
nor can the flame of all this burning touch.  
94 In Heaven there is a gentle Lady who  
berues this barrier whence I bid thee fare,  
so that she bursts on high stern judgement through.  
97 She summoned Lucy to her in her prayer  
and said: 'Thy faithful one now needs thee so  
that I commend him to thy tender care.'  
100 Lucy, of every cruelty the foe,  
arose and came where I had not been long  
with Rachel, who was set there long ago.  
103 'Beatrice,' she said, 'God's very choral song,  
why help not him who had such love for thee  
that he forsook for thee the vulgar throng?  
106 Dost thou not hear him weep in misery?  
dost thou not see how he is combated  
by Death upon a flood wild as the sea?"  
109 None ever in the world so swiftly sped  
avoiding hurt or questing benefit,  
as came I, after suchlike words were said,  
112 Speeding me down from where the blessed sit,  
trusting thy noble speech whose modest lore  
honours thyself, and others hearing it."

12 *Influence of Virgil's noble speaking*

- 115 After she this had spoken, she forbore,  
and, weeping, turned her shining eyes away,  
wherefore to come she made me hasten more;
- 118 And, coming to thee even as she did pray,  
I drew thee from that beast which up the fair  
mountain, bereft thee of the briefer way.
- 121 What ails thee then? ah, why, why tarry there?  
why harbour in thy heart such cowardice?  
why not take liberty to do and dare,
- 124 When cherish for thee so much care as this  
in Court of Heaven three Ladies benedight,  
and mine own speaking pledges thee such bliss?"
- 127 Even as the flowerets by the chill of night  
bended and closed, when brightens them the sun  
uplist both stem and petal to the light,
- 130 So with my drooping courage I had done  
already, and began like one set free,  
so much good daring to my heart had run:
- 133 'O deep compassion of her who succoured me!  
and courteous thou, promptly obedient  
to the true words that she addressed to thee!
- 136 Thy words have with such ardent longing bent  
my heart to the adventure that, in troth,  
I have returned now to my first intent.
- 139 Now go, for one will animates us both:  
thou leader and thou lord and master mild!"  
So said I; and he moving, nothing loath
- 142 I entered on the pathway deep and wild.

## NOTES

Time: *Evening of Good Friday, 1300.*

*l. 13.* The allusions in Dante's address to Virgil are to the sixth book of the *Aeneid* and to the twelfth chapter of Second Corinthians.

*l. 22.* That the Roman Empire is a fundamental part of the Divine plan for human redemption is a principle in Dante's philosophy of history, as will be fully developed in Cantos vi and xviii of *Paradiso*.

*ll. 37-42.* For another notable passage on this theme see *Purgatorio* v. ll. 16-18.

*ll. 58 ff.* All the words of Beatrice breathe womanly sweetness and have that 'divine liquidity' which, since Chaucer, is so rare in our literature. Translation inevitably falls far short of the music and simplicity of the original.

*l. 67.* Not mere fine phrasing; no one could despise it more than Dante did. Poetry to him is the perfect utterance of the truth: hence the choice of a poet as the organ of human reason.

*l. 94.* The blessed Virgin Mary whose name, like that of Christ, recurs so often in other parts of the Poem, may not be directly mentioned in Hell. Likewise God is referred to commonly as 'Another'. Santa Lucia, who reappears, notably in *Purg.* ix, is a saint to whom Dante was especially devoted.

*l. 134.* This is Dante's third use of the word 'cortese' in the present canto. Surely the salutation given Virgil by the blessed spirit,

'O anima cortese mantovana' (l. 58)

must suggest to the thoughtful mind that the word has an almost religious connotation. Courtesy is even attributed to the Divinity in line 17, in *Par.* vii. 91 and in *Par.* xv. 48. The influence of this gracious virtue in softening the hard hearts of that time must have been notable. It is hardly possible to fathom its significance in the poetry of those centuries without being immersed in the soul of the Middle Ages. Much that now passes for religion might be none the worse for some infusion of a virtue once so celebrated and now perhaps somewhat antique.

## CANTO III

*The Dire Inscription and the Dark River*

- 1 Through me the way is to the city of woe;  
through me the way unto eternal pain;  
through me the way among the lost below.
- 4 Justice commoved my high Creator, when  
made me Divine Omnipotence, combined  
with Primal Love and Wisdom Sovereign.
- 7 Before me nothing was of any kind  
except eterne, and I eterne abide:  
leave, ye that enter in, all hope behind!
- 10 On high above a gateway I descried,  
written in dusky colour, this device:  
whence I: 'The sense is dire to me, O Guide!'
- 13 Then answered he, as of expert advice:  
'Here must thou every fear perforce neglect,  
here must perforce be killed all cowardice.'
- 16 Now come we where I taught thee to expect  
to look upon the woeful populace  
who have forgone the good of intellect.'
- 19 Laying his hand on mine with cheerful face,  
whence I was comforted, he made me keep  
right on and inward to the secret place.
- 22 Here lamentations, sighs, and wailings deep  
resounding, so the starless welkin fill  
that, at the first, I could not choose but weep.
- 25 Strange languages, discoursings horrible,  
accents of anger, histories of woes,  
smiting of hands, with voices hoarse and shrill,
- 28 Make a tumultuous roar that swirling goes  
forever in that air of truceless gloom,  
like to the sandblast when the whirlwind blows.
- 31 And I, who felt my head begirt with doom,  
said: 'Master, what is this I hear, and what  
people who seem with grief so overcome?'
- 34 And he replied to me: 'In this dim spot  
the miserable souls of those suspire  
whom infamy and honour both forgot.'

- 57 They are commingled with that caitiff quire  
of angels, who nowise rebellious were,  
nor true to God, but to their own desire.
- 40 The Heavens expelled them, not to be less fair,  
nor find they harbour in the pit of Hell  
lest over them the damned might glory there.'
- 43 'Master,' said I, 'what grievance is so fell  
to these, that their lament should be so great?'  
He answered: 'I will very briefly tell.
- 46 These have no hope of death; and this their state  
of blind existence is degraded so,  
they are envious of every other fate.
- 49 Report of them the world does not allow;  
Mercy and Justice hold them in disdain:  
let us not speak of them, but look, and go.'
- 52 And I beheld, on looking there again,  
a whirling banner running swiftly on,  
as scorning all delay; and such a train
- 55 Of people in pursuit of it that run,  
nothing but seeing could belief persuade  
that ever Death so many had fordone.
- 58 And recognizing some, I saw a shade  
in whom detected I that one of these  
who cravenly the Great Refusal made.
- 61 This was the sect of caitiffs, who displease,—  
as now forthwith I understood and knew,—  
not God alone but all His enemies.
- 64 Wretches who never were alive, and who  
were sorely stung upon their bodies nude  
by hornets and by wasps that thither flew.
- 67 These bathed the faces of those shades with blood  
which, blent with streaming tears, was at their feet  
gathered up by a loathsome vermin-brood.
- 70 And now my glances, pushing further, meet  
people upon the marge of a great stream;  
whence I: 'Now tell me, Master, I entreat,
- 73 What folk are these, and by what rule they seem  
so eager on the passage to be gone,  
as I distinguish by the feeble gleam.'

- 76 And he to me: 'These matters shall be known unto thee, when we stay from our advance upon the woeful marge of Acheron.'
- 79 Thereon with downcast eyes and modest glance, fearing my words were irksome to him, I far as the stream restrained from utterance.
- 82 And lo! upon a bark approaching nigh, one white with ancient tresses, passing old: 'Woe to you wicked spirits!' was his cry.
- 85 'Hope nevermore the Heavens to behold: I come to lead you to the other bank, into eternal darkness, heat, and cold.'
- 88 And thou, O living spirit, from the rank dispart thee, of these others who are dead.' And when he saw me not as one who shrank:
- 91 'Another way, by other ports,' he said, 'not here, shalt come for waftage to the shore: upon a lighter keel must thou be sped.'
- 94 'Vex thee not, Charon,' said my Monitor: 'thus it is willed where will is one and same with potency to fulfil,—and ask no more.'
- 97 Then quieted the shaggy cheeks became, of him, the boatman of the turbid mere, who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.
- 100 But those souls, who are weary all and bare, change colour and their teeth are chattering, soon as the cruel accents strike the ear.
- 103 God they blaspheme and their own sires, and sling curses on race and place and time and law both of their birth and their engendering.
- 106 Then, flocking all together, they withdraw, bitterly weeping, to the cursed shore awaiting each who holds not God in awe.
- 109 Charon, the demon, with the eyes that glow'r, beckoning to them, every one receives, and smites whomever lingers, with the oar.
- 112 As in the autumn season when the leaves, first one and then another, lightly fall, till all upon the ground the bough perceives:

- 115 Likewise the evil seed of Adam all  
    fling them from off that margin one by one  
        at signals, like the bird at his recall.
- 118 Thus over the dusk water they are gone,  
    and ere they can alight on yonder strand  
        forgathers a fresh throng on this anon.
- 121 'Son,' said the courteous Master, 'understand  
    that those who perish subject to God's ire  
        are all assembled here from every land,
- 124 And ready are to pass the river dire,  
    because Celestial Justice so doth goad  
        that very fear converts into desire.
- 127 No righteous spirit ever takes this road:  
    and hence, though Charon may of thee complain,  
        thou knowest now the meaning of his mode.'
- 130 When he had ended, all the dreary plain  
    so trembled that, but calling it to mind,  
        the terror bathes me now with sweat again.
- 133 The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind  
    with lightning flashes of vermillion deep,  
        whence consciousness I utterly resigned:
- 136 Then sank I like one overcome with sleep.

## NOTES

*Before reaching Limbo proper, we pass through what is neither Hell nor not-Hell, where those who were too cowardly to take sides or to have pronounced opinions, run to escape wasps and other petty plagues.*

*I.* 60. The Great Refusal was made in 1294 by Pope Celestine V, whose abdication was probably managed by his immediate successor, Boniface VIII, a chief object throughout the Poem of scorn and denunciation.

*II.* 64-9. The repulsive imagery symbolizes the vain remorse of those who in life were 'lukewarm and neither hot nor cold'.

*II.* 70-81. On approaching the dark river separating us from the First Circle, dialogue is, with definite artistic intention, cut short.

*II.* 82-129. Charon is the first of the demons enumerated in the note, Canto v. l. 4. The contrast between Charon and the guardian of Antepurgatory, Cato of Utica, is noteworthy. There is a long series of contrasts in detail between the persons and things of Hell and those of Purgatory and Paradise. Few of these contrasts can be referred to in these notes.

*I.* 93. The 'lighter keel' is that of the angel-pilot of *Purgatorio* ii.

*II.* 112-17. The poetic charm of the *Inferno* is due, in no small degree, to the art with which the Poet flashes at intervals the light of beauty upon the gloomy scenery of the mind. Cheering relief is given to the dark sublimity of this canto by the images of the leaves in autumn and of the bird obedient to the signal of the falconer.

*I.* 136. The Poet leaves the reader to imagine how he was carried across. Being asleep, he did not himself know. Description is wisely reserved for another ferriage (Canto viii). He begins Canto iv with his awakening on the other side. There has been much throwing about of brains concerning this passage on the part of anxious commentators.

CANTO IV

*First Circle: Limbo; the Virtuous Pagans*

- 1 A pealing burst of thunder loosed my sense  
from chains of heavy sleep, and made me bound  
like one who is awaked by violence:
- 4 And, risen erect, on every side around  
I moved my rested eye, and fixed my sight  
to recognize the features of that ground.
- 7 True is it that I stood upon the height  
above the valley of the Abyss of Woe,  
which gathers roar of wailing infinite.
- 10 It was so dark, deep, cloudy, that although  
my gaze upon the bottom I confined,  
not anything discerned I there below.
- 13 'Now go we down among the people blind,'  
began the Poet, pallid as the dead:  
'I will go first, and follow thou behind.'
- 16 And I, observant of his pallor, said:  
'How shall I come if thou afraid appear,  
by whom I am wonted to be comforted?'
- 19 'The anguish of the people downward here,  
portrays upon my face', said he at this,  
'that pity which thou deemest to be fear.'
- 22 The long way urges: come, be not remiss.'  
Thus he set forth, and made me enter thus  
the foremost circle that begirds the abyss.
- 25 Here was no sound perceptible to us  
of wailing, only sighs and sighs again,  
that made the eternal air all tremulous:
- 28 And this arose from woe unpanged with pain,  
felt by the great and thronging multitude  
of children and of women and of men.
- 31 'Askest thou not,' resumed the Master good,  
what spirits these may be whom thou perceivest?  
now these sinned not; yet all their rectitude
- 34 (This would I have thee learn before thou leavest),  
for want of Baptism, fails to satisfy  
the sanctions of the faith that thou believest:

- 37 And if they came before Christianity,  
     God they adored not as His dues require:  
     and among spirits such as these am I.
- 40 For such defects, and for no guilt entire,  
     we are lost, afflicted only in this sense;  
     that without hope we linger in desire.
- 43 Thereat my heart was wrung with grief intense,  
     for people of much worth I knew full well  
     abiding in that Limbo in suspense.
- 46 'Now tell me, Master mine, Lord, speak and tell,'  
     began I, craving utter certitude  
     about the faith that can all error quell,
- 49 'Went ever any, through his rectitude  
     or through Another, hence to blessed fate?'  
     Then he my covert language understood,
- 52 Replying: 'I was recent in this state  
     when I beheld One come omnipotent,  
     with sign of victory incoronate.
- 55 The shade of our first father penitent,  
     Abel his son and Noah, hence He drew;  
     Moses the lawgiver obedient;
- 58 Patriarch Abraham, King David too;  
     Israel with his sirc, with every son,  
     with Rachel for whose sake such pains he knew,
- 61 And many more, and gave them benison:  
     and thou must know that, earlier than these,  
     never a human soul salvation won.'
- 64 Not for his speaking did our going cease,  
     but ever through the forest did we fare,—  
     the forest, I mean, where spirits were the trees.
- 67 We had not travelled far as yet from where  
     my sleep befell, when I beheld a blaze  
     which conquered from the dark a hemisphere.
- 70 We still were distant by a little space,  
     yet not so far but I discerned in part  
     that honourable people held that place.
- 73 'O thou who honourest both science and art,  
     who may these be that so great honour claim,  
     thus set from fashion of the rest apart?'

- 76 And he to me: 'The honourable fame  
concerning them that in thy life doth ring,  
wins grace in Heaven that so advances them.'
- 79 Hereon I heard a voice thus heralding:  
'Honour to him of poets loftiest!  
His shade returneth home from wandering.'
- 82 After the voice had ceased and was at rest,  
four mighty shades advancing did I see,  
in whom nor grief nor joy was manifest.
- 85 The Master good began to say to me:  
'Mark him with sword in hand, appearing sirc  
to the others as he walks before the three:
- 88 That is old Homer, sovereign of the lyre,  
next follows Horace on, satiric wit,  
the third is Ovid, Lucan ends the quire.'
- 91 Since unto each doth, as to me, befit  
the name the one voice sounded, in such wise  
they do me honour, and do well in it.'
- 94 So gathered the fair school before mine eyes  
of that Lord of the very loftiest song  
who over all others like an eagle flies.
- 97 When they together had conversed, ere long  
with welcoming salute they gathered round me,  
whence smiled my Master on that genial throng.
- 100 And yet with honour higher far they crowned me,  
adopting me to their own brotherhood,  
whence sixth among those sons of light I found me.
- 103 Toward the light we thus our way pursued,  
discoursing things whereof fits reticence,  
even as there to speak of them was good.
- 106 We gained a castle's grand circumference,  
with seven lofty walls encircled round,  
bemoated with a brooklet for defence.
- 109 This passed we over as upon dry ground:  
through seven gates I with those sages went;  
a meadow of fresh verdure there we found.
- 112 People were there of aspect eminent,  
with eyes that moved majestical and slow:  
taciturn, but with voices sweetly blent.

- 115 A little to one side withdrew we so,  
     into an open place, and high and sheen,  
     where one and all we might behold and know.
- 118 There opposite, upon the enamelled green,  
     were shown to me the mighty souls, whom I  
     feel inwardly exalted to have seen.
- 121 I saw Electra with much people by,  
     Hector among them, and Æneas described,  
     and armoured Caesar with the falcon eye.
- 124 Camill', Penthesiléa, I espied;  
     over against them King Latinus and  
     Lavinia, his daughter, by his side.
- 127 I saw that Brutus who the Tarquin banned;  
     Lucrece, Cornelia, Julia, Marcia; then  
     saw Saladin apart and lonely stand.
- 130 And when I lifted up my brows again,  
     the Master I beheld of those who know,  
     sitting amid the philosophic train.
- 133 All look to him, to him all honour show:  
     here saw I Plato, Socrates advance,  
     who nearer him before the others go;
- 136 Democritus, who puts the world on chance,  
     Anaxagoras and Diogenes I saw;  
     Dioscorides, good analyst of plants;
- 139 Thales, and Zeno of the Stoic law;  
     Orpheus, Heraclitus, Empedocles,  
     Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca;
- 142 Euclid, geometer; Hippocrates,  
     Ptolemy, Avicen, Galen; him who wrought  
     the Commentary great, Averroës.
- 145 In full concerning all report I not,  
     for the long theme impels me forward: thus  
     many a time the word comes short of thought.
- 148 The band of six gives place to two of us:  
     my sage Guide leads me by another way  
     forth from the still air to the tremulous;
- 151 And now I come where shines no light of day.

## NOTES

*Unbaptized innocents and virtuous pagans, in a quiet and not unpleasant retreat (Limbo), where they suffer nothing but want of hope.*

ll. 34-45. No wonder great woe laid hold of our gentle Poet to find devoid of hope in that other world so many heroes and sages whom he held in honour. How the word 'honour' goes ringing through this sad bede-roll! See lines 70-93.

l. 53. Referring of course to the descent of Christ, who must not be named in Hell.

ll. 86-96. The selection here made of members of the fair school of Homer is, of course, marked by medieval limitations. To Dante, Greek literature was either unknown, or known through references or fragments in the Latin writers, or from Arabian sources. Of the Greek tragic and comic poets he appears to have known nothing. Among the Latins, Lucretius seems to have been unknown to him. It is pathetic to see him looking up to writers like Lucan and Statius and Ovid, and Livy 'the unerring' (*Inf.* xxviii. 12). But if his literary horizon was contracted, he cultivated it to the utmost verge.

ll. 106-11. The gates of the Castle, conceived as a magnificent University, typify the seven liberal arts of the Trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music). These formed the regular curriculum of the schools, as being the avenues to all human knowledge.

ll. 121-44. This resounding enumeration of famous worthies of the ancient and non-Christian world is interesting as being distinctive of the period, especially by reason of the names conspicuous for their absence. It is noteworthy that the only moderns are three illustrious Saracens: Saladin, Avicenna, Averroës. Dante and the 'learnèd clerks' of his century were greatly indebted to Arabian culture for what they knew of 'the master of those who know' (Aristotle). As to the famous Avicenna, his *canon* continued to be a text-book of medicine for a century after Rabelais studied it at Montpellier.

l. 141. Oxford text reads *Lino*.

## CANTO V

*Second Circle: Francesca da Rimini*

- 1 From the first circle thus I made descent  
     down to the second, whose contracted rim  
     girdles so much more woe it goads lament.
- 4 There Minos stands and snarls with clamour grim,  
     examines the transgressions at the gate,  
     judges, and sends as he encircles him.
- 7 Yea, when the spirit born to evil fate  
     before him comes confessing all, that fell  
     distinguisher among the reprobate.
- 10 Seeing what place belongs to it in Hell,  
     entwines him with his tail such times as show  
     how many circles down he bids it dwell.
- 13 Always before him many wait; they go  
     all turn by turn to sentence for their sin:  
     they tell and hear and then are whirled below.
- 16 'O thou that comest to the woeful inn!'  
     as soon as he beheld me, Minos cried,  
     leaving the act of so great discipline,
- 19 'Beware to enter, beware in whom confide,  
     be not deceived by wideness of the door.'  
     'Why dost thou also clamour?' said my Guide,
- 22 'Bar not his going, fated from before:  
     thus it is willed up yonder where is might  
     to bring the will to pass, and ask no more.'
- 25 And now the notes of woe begin to smite  
     the hollow of mine ear; now am I come  
     where I am pierced by wailings infinite.
- 28 I came into a place of all light dumb,  
     which bellows like a sea where thunders roll  
     and counter-winds contend for masterdom.
- 31 The infernal hurricane beyond control  
     sweeps on and on with ravishment malign  
     whirling and buffeting each hapless soul.
- 34 When by the headlong tempest hurled supine,  
     here are the shrieks, the moaning, the laments  
     here they blaspheme the puissance divine.

- 37 I learned that to such sorry recompense  
are damned the sinners of the carnal sting,  
who make the reason thrall to appetence.
- 40 And as great flocks of starlings on the wing  
in winter time together trooping go,  
so did that blast the wicked spirits fling
- 43 Now here, now there, now up, and now below:  
comfort of hope to them is never known  
either of rest or even less bitter woe.
- 46 And as the pilgrim cranes from zone to zone  
draw out their airy file and chant the dirge,  
so saw I, and I heard them making moan,
- 49 Shadows who on that storm-blast whirl and surge:  
whence I: 'Who, Master, are those tempest-flung,  
round whom the black air whistles like a scourge?'
- 52 'The first', said he, 'that multitude among,  
of whom thou seekest knowledge more precise,  
was empress over many a tribe and tongue.
- 55 Abandoned so was she to wanton vice  
that, her own stigma so to wipe away,  
lust was made licit by her law's device.
- 58 That is Semiramis,—as annals say  
consort of Ninus and successor too;  
where governs now the Soldan, she held sway.
- 61 The next one, lo! herself for love she slew  
and to Sichæus' urn her faith dismissed;  
next wanton Cleopatra comes to view;
- 64 Now lookest thou on Helen, whose acquist  
brought evil years; and great Achilles see  
who found in Love his last antagonist.
- 67 Look, Paris, Tristan . . . , and he pointed me  
a thousand shades, and named me every name,  
who in our life gave Love the victory.
- 70 When I had heard my Teacher many a dame  
of eld enumerate, and many a knight,  
pity assailed me and almost overcame.
- 73 'Poet', began I, 'fain would I invite  
speech with those twain who go a single way  
and seem upon the wind to be so light.'

- 76 And he made answer: 'Thou shalt mark when they  
     draw near to us, and then adjure them by  
         the Love that leads them, and they will obey.'
- 79 Thereafter when a whirlwind swept them nigh  
     I lifted up my voice: 'O souls forspent,  
         come and have speech with us if none deny.'
- 82 As doves to the heart's call obedient  
     are borne along to the beloved nest  
         on wide and steady pinions homeward bent,
- 85 So these came tow'rd us through the air unblest,  
     veering away from Dido and her line,  
         so tender and so strong was my request.
- 88 'O living creature gracious and benign  
     who goest through the dusk air visiting  
         us who left earth with blood incarnadine,
- 91 If friendly were the Universal King  
     we would be praying to Him for thy peace,  
         seeing thou pitiest our suffering.
- 94 Whatever ye to speak and hear may please,  
     that will we speak and hear you close at hand,  
         if yet awhile the wind as now may cease.
- 97 The town where I was born sits on the strand  
     beside the water where descends the Po  
         in quest of peace, with his companion band.
- 100 Love that in gentle heart is soon aglow  
     laid hold on this one for the person fair  
         bereft me, and the mode is still my woe.
- 103 Love that doth none beloved from loving spare,  
     to do him pleasure made my heart so fain  
         that, as thou seest, not yet doth it forbear.
- 106 Love led us down to death together: Cain  
     awaits the soul of him who laid us dead.'
- These words from them to us returned again.
- 109 Hearing those injured souls, I bowed my head  
     and held it for so long dejectedly  
         that, 'Whereon thinkest thou?' the Poet said.
- 112 When I could answer, I began: 'Ah me,  
     how many tender thoughts, what longing drew  
         these lovers to the pass of agony!'

- 113 Thereafter I turned to them, and spoke anew:  
‘Francesca, all thy torments dim mine eyes  
with tears that flow for sympathy and rue.
- 118 But tell me, in the time of the sweet sighs  
by what, and how did Love to you disclose  
the vague desires, that ye should realize?’
- 121 And she to me: ‘It is the woe of woes  
I remembrance of the happy time to keep  
in misery,—and that thy Teacher knows.
- 124 But if thy yearning be indeed so deep  
to know the first root of a love so dear,  
I will do even as they who speak and weep.
- 127 One day together read we for good cheer  
of Love, how he laid hold on Launcélot:  
alone we were and without any fear.
- 130 Many and many a time that reading brought  
our eyes to meet, and blanched our faces o'er,  
but only one point we resisted not.
- 133 When reading of the smile long-waited-for  
being kissed by such a lover chivalrous,  
he, never now from me divided more,
- 136 Kissed me upon the mouth, all tremulous. . . .  
Gallehardt was the book and writer too:  
that day there was no reading more for us.’
- 139 And while one soul was saying this, for rue  
so wept the other, that I fainted all  
for pity, even as dying persons do,
- 142 And fell, as would a lifeless body fall.

## NOTES

*Victims of sensuality, continually buffeted about by fierce gales.*

I. 4. Upon entering each of the five circles outside the City of Dis the Poet is confronted and challenged by a mythological guardian: (1) Charon, (2) Minos, (3) Cerberus, (4) Plutus, (5) Phlegyas. Each of these is in turn rebuked and humbled by Virgil. Within Dis the (7) Minotaur is similarly encountered and defeated, but a far more powerful hand had been needed to open the gate of that city against the (6) Furies (*Erinyes*). (8) Geryon, at entrance to Malpouches (Malebolge) is tamed to service; as finally is (9) Antæus at entrance to the Pit. In shining contrast with these are the noble custodians of the terraces of Purgatory.

II. 28-51. With this passage compare that in which Shakespeare rises, as only he could do, to an equal height upon such a theme (*Measure for Measure*, III. i. 118-32). Here, as everywhere, Dante, with a justice that, if not Divine, is certainly poetic, makes the punishment fit, or typify the crime. With I. 28 compare Canto i., l. 60.

I. 65-6. Dante did not have access to the poems of Homer. He follows the tradition then current that Achilles met death at the hands of Paris, who decoyed the Grecian hero into a temple for a meeting with the Trojan princess Polyxena, of whom he was enamoured.

I. 97. Ravenna, where Dante spent his latter years in the service or under the protection of its lord, Guido Novello da Polenta, a nephew of Francesca. The mode of her death is so grievous to her because it deprived her of a chance to repent.

II. 139-42. Although Francesca speaks for both the lovers, her words are marked by a womanly reticence that approves her to be, like Pia in *Purg.* v, a true sister to Desdemona and hapless Ophelia. To enlarge here upon the delicate dramatic truth of this poignant recital would be impertinent. But it may be remarked, with reference to the effect of the tale upon the Poet, that his swooning has a far deeper root than mere pity or even sympathy. He may well mean to suggest that he felt himself already wounded by the sword with which Beatrice is soon to pierce him. Cf, *Purg.* xxx-xxxii; especially the reference to the 'pargoletta' (dainty maid), xxxi. 59.

## CANTO VI

*Third Circle: The Intemperate*

- 1 On coming to my senses, closed at sight  
    deplorable of them, the kindred twain,  
        pity for whom had overwhelmed me quite,
- 4 New souls in torment and new modes of pain  
    wherever I am moving I behold,  
        wherever I turn and look about again.
- 7 In the Third Circle am I, where the cold  
    eternal cursed heavy rain doth flow,  
        in mode and measure ever as of old.
- 10 Thick hail and turbid water-drops and snow  
    down through the darkling air forever fall;  
        soul stench receives them on the ground below.
- 13 Cerberus, fierce and monstrous animal,  
    with triple gullet barks in currish wise  
        above the people here submerged withal.
- 16 Greasy and black his beard, and red his eyes,  
    and belly big, and fingers clawed a'main:  
        clutching the spirits, he doth rend and slice.
- 19 Howling like dogs by reason of the rain,  
    they shelter one side with the other,—thus  
        turn back and forth the reprobates profane.
- 22 The open-mouthed great dragon Cerberus  
    displayed his fangs, what time he us descried:  
        no limb had he that was not tremulous.
- 25 And, spreading palms and fingers out, my Guide  
    took earth up and, full-listed, flung it right  
        into those gullets ravenous and wide.
- 28 As dog that barks for craving appetite  
    grows quiet setting tooth upon his food,  
        for but to gorge it doth he tug and fight,
- 31 So quiet grew those faces, filth-imbrued,  
    of Demon Cerberus, who bellows so  
        the spirits would be deaf if they but could.
- 34 We passed above the shadows whom below  
    the heavy rain is beating, treading down  
        what seems a body, but is empty show.

- 37 Prone on the bottom lay they every one,  
except that sudden sat erect one shade  
as soon as it perceived us passing on.
- 42 'O thou who through this Hell art led,' it prayed,  
'recall me, if thou canst, to memory:  
or ever I was unmade, wast thou made.'
- 43 'Perchance,' said I, 'the anguish thou dost dree,  
doth from my memory thy form efface  
so that, it seems, I never looked on thee.'
- 46 But tell me who thou art, that in a place  
so woeful liest, punished in such plight  
that none, though greater, were so much disgrace.'
- 49 'Thy city,' he returned, 'distended quite  
with envy till the sack no more can hold,  
held me as hers, when life to me was bright.'
- 52 Ciacco ye citizens called me of old:  
for the pernicious guilt of gluttony  
the rain subdues me, as thou dost behold.
- 55 And, wretched spirit, not alone am I,  
since for like guilt these suffer, all and some,  
like punishment': no more he made reply.
- 58 'Ciacco,' I answered him, 'thy martyrdom  
doth weigh me down to tears compassionate:  
but tell me, if thou knowest, to what will come
- 61 The citizens of the divided state?  
if any one therein be just? and whence  
such mighty discord makes it desolate?'
- 64 And he to me: 'After long turbulence,  
blood being shed, the rustic faction rising  
will drive the others forth, with much offence.
- 67 Thereafter shall three suns prove term sufficing  
for them to fall and the others rise again  
by force of him who now is temporizing.
- 70 Long while shall they a lofty front maintain,  
keeping the former, spite of tears and shame,  
'neath heavy fardels bended down amain.
- 73 The just are two, but none gives heed to them:  
envy and avarice and arrogance  
are triple sparks that set all hearts aflame.'

- 76 Here ended he the sad deliverance.  
Whereat I: 'Since I crave instruction yet,  
pray favour me with further utterance.'
- 79 Farinata and Tegghiaio, of worth so great,  
James Rusticucci, Arrigo, Mosca, as well  
as others who had hearts on valour set,
- 82 Tell where they are,—that I may know them, tell:  
for great desire constrains me now to learn  
whether Heaven soothe them, or envenom Hell.'
- 85 'Among the blackest souls,' he made return,  
'whom different sins toward the bottom weigh,  
these, goest thou down so far, thou mayst discern.'
- 88 But when thou art in the sweet world, I pray  
that thou wilt bring me back to human mind:  
no more I answer thee, no more I say.'
- 91 His straight eyes thereupon aslant inclined,  
awhile he scanned me; then did headlong fall  
down to the level of the other blind.
- 94 'No more,' my Leader said, 'he waken shall  
this side of the angelic trumpet sound.  
When shall arrive the judge inimical'
- 97 Each one shall in his dismal tomb be found,  
his flesh and outward figure reassume,  
and hear what shall eternally resound.'
- 100 So fared we onward through that filthy scum  
of shadows and of sleet, with footing slow,  
touching a little on the life to come.
- 103 Wherefore I questioned: 'Master, will this woe  
after the final Judgement grow amain,  
or less become, or burning be just so?'
- 106 'Turn to thy science,' answered he again,  
'which holds, the more complete the thing, the more  
it feels of pleasure, and the like of pain.'
- 109 Though these accursed people nevermore  
reach true perfection, after that event  
they look to be completer than beforc.'
- 112 A circling course along that road we went,  
speaking far more than may repeated be;  
then came we to the point of the descent,
- 115 And here found Plutus the arch-enemy.

## NOTES

*The Gluttons are lying on the ground whipped by filthy rain, pelted with hail and snow, and persecuted by Cerberus, cruel of claw and deafening in his clamour.*

I. 34. The spirits, souls, shades, as they are variously called, although but shadows of what they were in life, seem subject to being physically maltreated, as by Cerberus, or, as here, trodden upon. We are in a region where other laws obtain than those we know, or suppose ourselves to know. Cf. Virgil's pathetic remarks on the subject near the beginning of *Purg.* iii. It must never be forgotten that all the physical imagery of Hell is the Poet's only means of vividly figuring the tortures of self-condemnation. Until psychology is able to adjust its boundary dispute with physiology, we are hardly justified in carping at Dante for leaving the frontier undetermined.

I. 52. Ciacco is a familiar form of Giacomo (cf. Jack). Such names are of course not necessarily nicknames. It also means *hog*, possibly by onomatopœia. This person seems to have been well known but his identity is uncertain.

II. 64-75. This prophecy refers to incidents in the bitter, fluctuating, dramatic struggle for mastery in Florence between the aristocratic Black Guelfs, captained by Corso Donati, and the Whites, led by the Cerchi—whose rustic origin is so often referred to as to convince us that they retained some of the faults of breeding that stamp in all ages the newly rich.—The trimmer, 'he who now is temporizing' (I. 69), is Pope Boniface. Who the two just men are is matter of conjecture.

II. 79-87. If we go down far enough, we shall meet all of these worthies except Arrigo, of whom nothing is recorded.

II. 106-11. *Thy science, as later in Canto xi, thy physics, thy ethics,* is always with reference to Aristotle, 'master of those who know'.—The doctrine is that the soul understands best which inhabits the most perfect body, and thus if the body lacks an organ, understanding is impaired. The damned cannot attain perfection in their damnation until soul shall be reunited with body.

## CANTO VII

*Fourth Circle: The Parsimonious and the Prodigal*

- 1 'Papé Satan, Papé Satan aleppe!'  
Thus Plutus' clucking voice beginning went;  
and that benignant Sage, experienced  
4 In all things, said for my encouragement:  
'Fear not, for any war that he may wage  
shall not prohibit thee the rock's descent.'  
7 Then to that bloated visage turned my Sage,  
and said: 'Accursed wolf, be not so loud!  
and be thou gnawed within by thine own rage.  
10 Not without cause this going is allowed:  
thus it is willed above where Michaël  
wrought vengeance for the deed of whoredom proud.'  
13 As ocean-faring sails, which the winds swell,  
fall in a tangle if the mainmast crack,  
so to the ground the cruel monster fell.  
16 Descending into the Fourth Gap, we track  
still farther that declivity of woe  
which doth our universal guilt ensack.  
19 Justice Divine! can any there below  
heap up such penalties and travail new?  
and why does guilt of ours consume us so?  
22 As on Charybdis yonder surges do,  
each against other shattering its crest,  
so here the folk their counter-dance pursue.  
25 Here saw I people more than all the rest  
who from each quarter, with a howling din,  
were trundling burdens by main force of breast.  
28 They clash together, and then both begin  
the counter-movement, rolling back again,  
shouting: 'Why throw away?' and 'Why hold in?'
- 31 So on both sides they circle to regain  
the point opposed, along the dismal mew,  
still shouting their opprobrious refrain:
- 34 Then as along his semicircle drew  
each one to the other joust, he wheeled withal.  
And I, who felt my heart as stricken through,

- 34      *Transient Farce of Getting and Spending*
- 37 Said: 'Master mine, now tell me, who may all  
these people be? and on our left-hand side  
these shaven crowns,—were they all clerical?'
- 40 'All these were in the first life,' he replied,  
'of mind so squinting that the middle route  
of measured spending could not be espied.'
- 43 With voice exceeding clear they bark this out,  
when to the two points of the circle come,  
where counter-crime compels them turn about.
- 46 These heads bereft of hair were, all and some,  
priests, popes, and cardinals, whose practices  
show avarice in sovereign masterdom.'
- 49 Then said I: 'Master, among such as these  
there surely must be some I ought to know,  
who were defiled with these iniquities.'
- 52 And he to me: 'Vain thoughts combinest thou:  
the purblind life that made them sordid there  
bedims them to all recognition now.'
- 55 To the two buttings will they ever fare;  
out of the sepulchre will these arise  
close-fisted, even as those with scissored hair.'
- 58 Ill-giving and keeping ill have Paradise  
bereft them, and in such a scuffle joined:  
no beauteous phrase to grace it I devise.'
- 61 How transient is the farce, here mayst thou find,  
of goods committed unto Fortune, son,  
whence buffet one another humankind.'
- 64 For all the gold the moon looks down upon,  
or that did ever in the world exist,  
could of these weary souls give rest to none.'
- 67 'Master, now tell me more,' did I insist:  
'This Fortune whereunto thou dost allude,  
what is she, with the world's wealth in her fist?
- 70 And he to me: 'O foolish human brood,  
what ignorance is this wherein ye pine!  
Now let my judgement of her be thy food.'
- 73 He whose transcendent wisdom is divine,  
fashioned the skies, and gave them those wh  
that every part to every part may shine,

- 76 So equally do they the light divide;  
likewise for earthly grandeur did ordain  
a common regent, who, as times betide,  
79 Might work vicissitude of treasures vain,  
that they from people and from kindred pass,  
beyond all human prudence to restrain.  
82 Whence rules one race, another cries "Alas!"  
obeying her decree, the circumstance  
whereof is hidden, like the snake in grass.  
85 Your wisdom can no counterstand advance:  
she looks beforehand, judges, and pursues,  
as do the other gods, her governance.  
88 Her permutations have not any truce:  
necessity makes her precipitate,  
with frequent turns of luck at fast and loose.  
91 Such is that one against whom people prate  
who rather ought to praise her, doing amiss  
to deal in blame and to vituperate.  
94 But she is blest and takes no heed of this:  
with other primal creatures jocundly  
she rolls her wheel, rejoicing in her bliss.  
97 Now go we down to deeper misery:  
already sinks each star that made ascent  
when I set forth,—no loitering may be.  
100 Across the circle to the bound we went,  
above a bubbling fountain that careered  
down through a gully where it found a vent.  
103 The water far more dark than perse appeared:  
and as the dusky waves companioned us,  
we entered downward by a pathway weird.  
106 A marish, Styx by name, this dolorous  
rivulet fosters when its waters flow  
to foot of the gray slope precipitous.  
109 And standing there intently gazing, lo!  
I saw a folk bemired upon that fen,  
all of them naked, and with look of woe.  
112 Each smote his fellow with the hand, and then  
with both the feet and with the chest and head,  
rending with teeth and rending once again.

- 115 'Now seest thou, son,' the kindly Master said,  
    'the souls of those whom Wrath did overquell:  
        and I would also have it credited  
118 That underneath the water people dwell  
        who sigh, and make it bubble at the brim,  
            as wheresoe'er it turn, thine eye may tell.  
121 Fixt in the ooze, they murmur forth this hymn:  
        "Sweet sun-rejoicing air did we respire  
            sullenly, drowned in sluggish vapours grim:  
124 Now lie we sullen here in the black mire."  
        They gurgle in their gullets this refrain,  
            because they cannot speak with words entire.  
127 Thus, in wide compass round the filthy fen,  
        between the dry bank and the bog we passed,  
            scanning the guzzlers of the puddle: then  
130 We reached the bottom of a tower at last.

## NOTES

I. 1. These words of Plutus and those of the giant Nimrod (xxxii. 67) are doubtless intended as senseless gibberish, as becomes the nature of these creatures. What in the light of Eternity (*sub specie eternitatis*) could be more foolish than the love of money? See note to Canto v, l. 4.

II. 22-35. The Avaricious from one side, the Prodigal from the other, are rolling great weights until their lines clash together like the counter-currents of the Strait of Messina, between Scylla and Charybdis (greatly feared by the ancients).

I. 39. Cropped hair is a symbol of lavishness. 'He has spent his whole substance, even to the hair of his head' (Italian saying).

II. 49-54. So the ignoble usurers of noble family are known only by their heraldry. Canto xvii, l. 52 ff.

II. 68-96. Fortune, regarded as an angelic intelligence whose function it is to bring down the mighty and exalt those of low estate.

II. 115-26. The Wrathful and the Sullen are immersed in the muddy Styx. The Sullen appear to be entirely submerged. *Accidia*, which I translate as *sullenness*, is deliberate, repressed, rankling wrath or rancour.

## CANTO VIII

*Fifth Circle: The Wrathful*

- 1 Long while before (I say continuing)  
   we reached the bottom of that tower so high,  
   our gaze upon its top was lingering
- 4 By reason of two lights we could descry;  
   and other signal gleamed far opposite,  
   so far away it hardly caught the eye.
- 7 Turned to that Sea of Wisdom infinite,  
   I said: 'What means this? what may answered be  
   by yonder beacon? and who kindled it?'
- 10 'The thing we await thou mayst already see  
   over the turbid waves,' he answered, 'so  
   the marish-vapour hide it not from thee.'
- 13 Cord never shot an arrow from the bow  
   that ran so swift a course athwart the air,  
   as o'er the water at that moment, lo!
- 16 I saw a little bark toward us fare,  
   under a single boatman's pilotage,  
   who shouted: 'Now, fell spirit, art thou there?'
- 19 'Phlegyas, Phlegyas,' replied to him my Sage,  
   'this time thou shoutest vainly: it is meet  
   thou have us but to pass the ferriage.'
- 22 As one who listens to some foul deceit  
   that has been done him, and resents it sore,  
   such became Phlegyas in his gathered heat.
- 25 Embarking thereupon my Monitor  
   caused me to take my station at his side,—  
   and only then the boat seemed laden more.
- 28 When I was in the wherry with my Guide,  
   the ancient prow upon the passage sped,  
   more than with others furrowing the tide.
- 31 While we were running through the channel dead,  
   arose before me one whom mud did steep:  
   'Who art thou, coming ere thy time?' he said.
- 34 And I: 'Though come, I stay not in the deep:  
   but who art thou who art grown filthy so?'  
   And he: 'Thou seest that I am one who weep.'

- 37 Then I to him: 'With weeping and with woe  
accursed spirit, tarry here for aye:  
for thee, all filthy as thou art, I know.'
- 40 Then stretched he forth both hands, the boat to stay:  
but him my wary Master from us pressed,  
crying: 'Away, with the other dogs, away!'
- 43 Then said 'Indignant soul!' as he caressed  
my bosom with embrace, my cheek with kiss,  
'blessed be she that bore thee 'neath her breast!'
- 46 A person arrogant on earth was this,  
no least report of good his memory graces:  
therefore his shade down here in fury is.
- 49 How many now up yon hold kingly places,  
who are to wallow here in mire like swine,  
leaving behind them horrible dispraises.'
- 52 'Much should I like,' said I, 'O Master mine,  
to see him in this hellbroth dipped and dyed,  
before we issue from the marsh malign.'
- 55 And he to me: 'Thou shalt be satisfied  
ere comes the shore to view: for it is fit  
that such desire of thine be gratified.'
- 58 Short while thereafter I beheld him smit  
by that bespattered folk with stroke so fell  
that still I praise and thank the Lord for it.
- 61 'At Philip Argenti! at him!' all did yell:  
that spirit Florentine exasperate  
turned on his very self with tooth and nail.
- 64 We left him there, nor more do I narrate:  
but lamentation smote mine ears upon,  
whence I look forward with mine eyes dilate.
- 67 And the good Master said: 'Now, O my son,  
the city named of Dis is nigh at hand,  
with heavy citizens, great garrison.'
- 70 And I: 'Already in the valley stand  
its mosques, O Master, and to me they show  
vermilion, as if issuing from the brand.'
- 73 And he made answer: 'The eternal glow  
of inward flame kindles that ruddy glare,  
as thou perceivest in this Hell below.'

- 76 Then came we into the deep fosses, where  
     they compass round that town disconsolate:  
         the walls appeared to me of iron there.
- 79 Not without making first a circuit great,  
     we came unto a place where loudly cried  
         the boatman: 'Get ye out, here is the gate.'
- 82 I saw above the portals and beside,  
     thousands rained down from Heaven, who wrathful  
         'Who is this man that, never having died,' [said:]
- 85 Is going through the kingdom of the dead?'  
     And my sage Master signalled he would fain  
         talk with them privately.—Thus they were led
- 88 A little to abate their great disdain,  
     and cried: 'Come thou alone; let him go back  
         who has made bold to enter this domain.'
- 91 Alone shall he retrace his reckless track:  
     let him attempt it; for thou here shalt stay,  
         who hast revealed to him a land so black.'
- 94 Imagine, Reader, what was my dismay  
     at hearing that accursed language: for  
         I felt that I could never find the way.
- 97 'O my beloved Leader, thou who more  
     than seven times hast made me safe, and hast  
         rescued from peril deep,' did I implore.
- 100 'Do not forsake me thus undone at last;  
     and if the going farther be denied,  
         let us retrace our steps together fast.'
- 103 And that Lord who had thither been my Guide,  
     answered: 'Fear nothing, for the way we go  
         by Such is given, none turneth us aside.'
- 106 Wait here, and let thy soul, forwearied so.  
     be fed with better hope and comforted:  
         I will not leave thee in the world below.'
- 109 And thus the gentle Father forth is sped,  
     there leaving me who in conjecture dwell;  
         for Yes and No contend within my head.
- 112 What he proposed to them I could not tell;  
     but long he had not tarried with them, when  
         back inwards all went scurrying pell-mell.

- 115 The gates they shut, those enemies of men,  
on my Lord's bosom, who, excluded thence,  
with tardy steps returned to me again.
- 118 His eyes were on the ground, of confidence  
his forehead shorn, and amid sighs he spake:  
'Who has denied me the grim tenements?'
- 121 And then to me: 'What though my wrath awake,  
be not dismayed, for I shall find the way,  
whatever obstacle within they make.'
- 124 This insolence is nothing new, for they  
displayed it at less hidden gate of yore,  
which stands unbolted to this very day.
- 127 Thou sawest the deadly writ above the door;  
and now descends the steep upon this side,  
passing without a guide the circles o'er,
- 130 One who shall fling the city open wide.'

## NOTES

*The Wrathful, plunged in the muddy Stygian lagoon and continually fighting among themselves, on', waiting to persecute some particularly odious neighbour.*

ll. 4-6. The other beacon is from the high tower in the City of Dis: Canto ix, l. 36. Compare ll. 70-5 of the present Canto. Such signals were the telegraphy of that age.

l. 19. Phlegyas is utilized, as later Geryon and Antaeus. See note to Canto v, l. 4.

ll. 32-63. Filippo Argenti, of the great house of the Adimari, a swaggering, insolent noble who shod his horse with silver. Boccaccio describes him as a tall, swart, sinewy fellow of enormous strength, prone to anger on the slightest occasion. Boccaccio tells an illustrative anecdote of him (*Decameron* ix, 8). Franco Sacchetti (*Novelle*, 114) tells a quaint story of the ironical plea of Dante for a young man of the Adimari family, who was either identical with, or of nature akin to, this personage.—We may have before us the only instance, in which Dante can fairly be suspected of personal animosity against one of the 'submerged'. The case of Bocca degli Abati (Canto xxxii), whom Dante never saw, is not in point. Dante's usual attitude toward the shades of sinners is sympathetic. For a terrible characterization of the Adimari, see *Par. xvi.* 115-20.

l. 71. The reference to the mosques in the Capital of the Infernal Empire is in harmony with the elaborate poetical parallelism between Heaven and Hell, the things of God and those of Lucifer, which is one of the features of Dante's art. To the mind of the medieval Christian the mosque is the temple of a wicked heresy. Thus Hell has 'cloisters'; the members of the 'college' of the hypocrites wear 'cowls'; Dante goes so far as to parody one of the Latin hymns of the Church to emphasize the contrast between Christ and Satan (beginning of Canto xxxiv).

l. 115. Virgil's repulse here seems to shadow forth a spiritual crisis so terrible that the noblest human reason is unavailing. There are dreadful gates where the wisest can only cast his eyes to the ground. In the middle of the next Canto the Poet emphasizes the importance of the allegory in this crucial passage.

l. 124. The fallen angels, become demons, had likewise made bold to oppose the descent of Christ into Hell.

## CANTO IX

Sixth Circle: *The Furies and the Angel*

- 1 The cowardice that blanched my outward hue  
  sering my Guide returning back from thence,  
    the sooner checked in him his colour new.
- 4 He halted like a listener intent,  
  for but a little way the eye could pierce  
    so darkling was the air, the murk so dense.
- 7 'Yet it behoves us win the fight, though fierce,'  
  began he: 'Nay but . . . so great help was sent, . . .  
    How long it seems here till Some one appears!
- 10 I plainly saw how what at first he meant,  
  he sought with after thoughts to cancel through  
    in phrases from the former different.
- 13 But still his language roused my fear anew,  
  for in the broken phrase I traced a scope  
    perchance more harmful than he had in view.
- 16 'Into this hollow, down the dismal slope  
  doth ever any come from the first grade  
    whose only punishment is crippled hope?'
- 19 So questioned I; and in reply he said:  
  'Rarely does any out of our abode  
    perforn the journey whereon I am sped.
- 22 Once previously, indeed, I took this road  
  conjured by that Erichtho void of grace  
    who erst their bodies to the shades bestowed.
- 25 My flesh was bare of me but little space,  
  when she compelled me enter yonder mure,  
    to draw a spirit forth from Judas' place.
- 28 That is the lowest round, and most obscure,  
  and farthest from the all-circling Heaven: the path  
    I know full well: therefore be thou secure.
- 31 This marish, breathing forth the fetid seath,  
  begirds the woesful city of the dead,  
    where now we cannot enter without wrath.'
- 34 I bear not now in mind what more he said,  
  because so fast were riveted mine eyes  
    to that high tower with summit glowing red,

- 37 Where on a sudden up erect arise  
 infernal Furies three of bloody dye,  
 who have the limbs of women and their guise;
- 40 Bright green the hydras they are girded by;  
 little horned serpents pleated in a braid  
 like tresses round their cruel temples lie.
- 43 And recognizing every cruel maid  
 of her, the Queen of everlasting woe.  
 'Behold,' he bade me, 'the Erinyes dread.'
- 46 This is Megæra on the left, and lo!  
 Alecto weeping yonder on the right;  
 Tisiphone is between,' he ended so.
- 49 Each with her talons rips her breast; they smite  
 upon themselves with palms, so loudly wailing  
 that close I press the Poet in affright.
- 52 'Medusa come, with stone his body scaling,'  
 all shouted looking downward; 'to our bane  
 avenged we not on Theseus his assailing.'
- 55 'Turn round, and let thine eyes close shut remain:  
 for should the Gorgon come, and shouldst thou see,  
 there would be no returning up again.'
- 58 Thus said the Master; and thereafter he  
 turned me, nor trusted to my hands alone,  
 but also with his own blindfolded me.
- 61 O ye who hold sane intellect your own,  
 consider heedfully the hidden lore  
 beneath the veil of the strange verses thrown!
- 64 And now there came the troubled waters o'er  
 a crashing clangour of a fearful kind,  
 whereat were trembling yon and hither shore:
- 67 Not otherwise it was than when the wind,  
 by dint of adverse heats grown wild and high,  
 tosses the forest boughs, and unconfined
- 70 Shatters, and dashes down, and sweeps them by:  
 superbly whirls along in dust and gloom,  
 making the wild beasts and the shepherds fly.
- 73 He loosed mine eyes: 'Across that ancient foam  
 be now the nerve of sight directed yond,'  
 he bade me, 'where most pungent is the fume.'

- 76 As frogs before their serpent-foe abscond,  
    all slipping through the water in retreat  
        till squatted on the bottom of the pond,  
79 So saw I thousands of lost spirits fleet  
    before a single Being who did fare  
        over the Stygian ford with unmet feet.  
82 He wasted from his face that fetid air  
    moving the left hand forward ceaselessly,  
        and only for that noyance seemed to care.  
85 That he was sent from Heaven I well could see  
    and to the Master turned, whose beckoning hand  
        bade me do homage to him tacitly.  
88 Ah, how indignant seemed he! With light wand  
    he touched and opened wide to us the gate,  
        wherein was no resistance to withstand.  
91 'O abject race, from Heaven how alienate!'  
    began he, standing on the horrible sill,  
        'how harbour ye this insolence so great?  
94 Wherefore recalcitrant against that Will  
    which from its purpose never can be shut,  
        and which has many a time increased your ill?  
97 What profits it against the Fates to butt?  
    your Cerberus, as ye are well aware,  
        for this still goes with chin and gullet cut.'  
100 Then he turned back by the foul thoroughfare,  
    speaking no word to us, but did advance  
        like one constrained and urged by other care  
103 Than that of any who before him stands.  
    Toward the city paced we afterward,  
        enheartened by the holy ordinance.  
106 Therein we entered, finding none to guard:  
    and I, because of my desire to know  
        the lot of any in such fortress barred,  
109 Being within, cast round mine eye; and lo!  
    before me far and wide spread out a land  
        full of atrocious torment and of woe.  
112 Even as at Arles, where Rhone becomes a pond,  
    even as at Pola near Quarnaro Bay  
        which limits Italy and bathes her strand,

- 115 Sepulchres strew the ground in rough array:  
here upon every hand it was the same,  
except that here more bitter was the way:
- 118 For scattered in among the tombs was flame,  
whereby such utter heat in them arose  
that never craft can more from iron claim.
- 121 Their lids were listed all, and out of those  
were issuing such dire lamenting cries,  
as told of wretched ones and full of woes.
- 124 'Master', said I, 'what people on this wise  
finding within these burial-chests their bed,  
make themselves audible with woeful sighs?'
- 127 'Here the arch-heretics', to me he said,  
'with followers of every sect are pent:  
more than thou thinkst the tombs are tenanted.'
- 130 Like unto like are here in burial blent,  
and heated more and less the monuments.'  
Then, when he to the right had turned, we went
- 133 Between the tortures and high battlements.

## NOTES

ll. 7-18. The anacoluthon, to denote dismay and confusion of mind, reminds one of the famous beginning of the first speech of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Dante's question (ll. 16-18) implies some doubt as to Virgil's competence as guide.

ll. 22-7. That the Thessalian witch Erichtho may thus have used the soul of Virgil for her purposes was suggested to Dante by a passage in Lucan (*Pharsalia* vi).

ll. 52-63. It seems to be agreed that the Furies represent pangs of conscience. But what is the Gorgon? Some say doubt, which turns the heart to stone; others make it an emblem of the hardening effect of despair. Almost every commentator has a special interpretation of the 'strange verses'. Compare the note to Canto viii, l. 115.

l. 80. This Divine messenger is without doubt one of the Angels. The need must have been indeed urgent that prompted this singular instance of Divine interposition. We shall arrive at the shore of the island of Purgatory before meeting another such sublime minister of grace (*Purg.* ii).

l. 89. The touch of the wand is effectively contrasted with the crash of the then familiar battering-ram. The same disdain of human instruments is expressed in *Purg.* ii. 31.

ll. 98-9. Cerberus had met more than his match when he attacked Hercules, who amused himself by chaining the monster and dragging him over a very rough road and releasing him far from home.

ll. 112-15. At Arles the Rhone no longer 'ponds', although its tendency to do so is manifest in La Camargue, a little below. A few relics of the ancient cemetery are still to be seen there. In the Great War Italy finally regained its boundary on the Gulf of Quarnaro, beyond Pola. Benvenuto states that some seven hundred tombs existed there. Impressive still are the Roman remains, especially the well-preserved amphitheatre.

ll. 127-31. Just why heretics receive this form of punishment may be left to the imagination of the student of religious history. Heresy does not fit into the classification of sins in Canto xi. Dante gives it a place between sins of passion and sins of malice, and obviously avoids dwelling upon its nature. In Canto x the reader's interest is shifted from the heretics to Florentine history and to the fate of the Poet himself. Those interested in Dante's treatment of the heretics are referred to the chapter on this Circle in Reade's *Moral System of Dante's Inferno*.

## CANTO X

*Sixth Circle: Farinata of the Uberti*

- 1 My Master now along a hidden track  
     between the city rampart and the fires,  
     goes forward, and I follow at his back.
- 4 'O Virtue high, that through these impious gyres  
     dost wheel me at thy pleasure,' began I,  
     'speak to me,—give content to my desires.'
- 7 The people in the sepulchres that lie,  
     might they be seen? With listed covers burn  
     they ever, and no one keeps guard thereby.'
- 10 'All will be shut within, when they return  
     back from Jehosaphat,' thereat he said,  
     'bringing their bodies from the burial urn.'
- 13 Hercin with Epicurus have their bed  
     his followers one and all, who represent  
     the spirit with the body to be dead.
- 16 But soon shalt thou within here have content  
     as to the question which thou hast proposed,  
     and to the wish whereof thou'rt reticent.'
- 19 And I: 'Good Leader, I do not keep closed  
     my heart from thee, except that words be few:  
     nor hast thou me now first thereto disposed.'
- 22 'O Tuscan, thou who goest living through  
     the city of fire, speaking becomingly,  
     may it please thee stay thy steps in this purlieu!'
- 25 The fashion of thy speech proclaimeth thee  
     a native of that land of noble pride  
     which haply suffered too much harm from me.'
- 28 Suddenly in such accents some one cried  
     from out one of the coffers; startled now,  
     I drew a little closer to my Guide.
- 31 Whereat he said: 'Turn round; what doest thou?  
     look, Farinata! thou canst see him well  
     towering up full height from belt to brow.'
- 34 His face already held me with a spell:  
     erect of breast and forehead there he stands  
     as if he entertained great scorn of Hell.'

- 37 My leader with adroit and daring hands  
thrust me among the sepulchres to him:  
'Brief be thy words!' that Monitor commands.
- 40 When I was standing at his footstone's rim,  
he eyed me a little, and then as in disdain:  
'Who were thy fathers?' came the question grim.
- 43 And I, to be compliant wholly fain,  
hid nothing, but made full acknowledgement;  
whereat he slightly frowned, and said again:
- 46 'Seeing that they were foes maleficent  
to me, my sires, my party, 't was my will  
twice to disperse them into banishment.'
- 49 'Though driven abroad,' I quick retorted, 'still  
both times from everywhere returned my kin;  
but yours have never rightly learned that skill.'
- 52 Thereat a shade, to the chin only seen,  
alongside him in the open tomb appeared:  
it had arisen upon its knees, I ween.
- 55 As if by longing urged, it round me peered  
to see if one were with me there behind;  
but after that surmise was wholly cleared,
- 58 Weeping it said: 'If through this prison blind  
thou go by loftiness of genius borne,  
where is my son, and why not with thee joined?'
- 61 'Not of myself tread I this land forlorn;  
yonder he waits who leads me here,—perchance  
your Guido held him overmuch in scorn.'
- 64 His language and the penal circumstance  
had told his name already: my reply  
was for that reason full of relevance.
- 67 But he was on his feet now with the cry:  
'Held dost thou say? and lives he then no more?  
strikes the glad light no longer on his eye?'
- 70 Become aware of some delay before  
I made reply, he forthwith backward sank  
into the tomb, and stood forth nevermore.
- 73 That other soul magnanimous and frank  
who caused my stay, stood undisquieted  
and neither moved his neck nor bent his flank.

50 *The Lost punished with Foresight*

- 76 'And if,'—continuing what before he said.—  
    'they've badly learned that skill,—if this be so  
        it is more torment to me than this bed.'
- 79 But not yet fifty times anew shall glow  
    the wan face of the Lady reigning here,  
        ere thou the burden of that skill shalt know.
- 82 And so the world may sweet to thee appear,  
    say why the statute of that people runs  
        so pitiless against my kindred dear?'
- 85 'The havoc and the massacre that once  
    stained,' I replied, 'the Arbia-water red,  
        are causing in our fane such orisons.'
- 88 And sighing thereupon, he shook his head:  
    'Not I alone in that, and in no case  
        should causeless with the rest have moved,' he said:
- 91 'But I it was, when in that other place  
    to wipe out Florence one and all agreed,  
        alone defended her with open face.'
- 94 'Ah! so may ever rest in peace your seed,'  
    entreated I, 'pray loose that knot for me,  
        which doth my judgement at this point impede.'
- 97 It seems that ye prophetically see  
    what time brings with it, if I hear aright,  
        and as to present things act differently.'
- 100 'We see, like him who has imperfect sight,  
    the things,' said he, 'that are remote from view,  
        so much still shines for us the Sovran Light:
- 103 When they draw nigh, or are, quite cancelled through  
    our vision is; if others bring it not,  
        unto your human state we have no clue.
- 106 Whence thou canst comprehend that blotted out  
    will be our knowledge, from that moment when  
        the portal of the future shall be shut.'
- 109 As conscious of my fault, I said: 'Now, then,  
    I wish that you would tell that fallen one  
        his son is numbered still with living men.'
- 112 And if just now I rendered answer none,  
    tell him it was because my thoughts were tied  
        still by that error which you have undone.'

- 113 Already was recalling me my Guide:  
wherefore more hurriedly did I request  
that spirit tell who else therein abide.
- 113 'With thousands here,' he said to me, 'I nest:  
the Second Frederick herein is pent,  
and the Cardinal: I speak not of the rest.'
- 121 He hid himself; and thereupon I went  
toward the ancient Poet, pondering  
that word which seemed to me maleficent.
- 124 He moved along, and then, thus journeying,  
inquired of me, 'Why art thou so bestirred?'  
Whereat I satisfied his questioning.
- 127 'Let memory preserve what thou hast heard  
against thyself.' that Sage adjured me so,  
lifting his finger;—'and now mark my word!
- 130 When thou shalt standing be in the sweet glow  
of her whose beauteous eye on all is bent,  
from her the journey of thy life shalt know.'
- 133 Then turned he leftward: from the wall we went,  
striking across toward the middle by  
a pathway leading to a pit that sent
- 136 Its loathsome stench ascending even so high.

## NOTES

*The heretics lie in open tombs filled with fire. Dante exhibits the great heretics, as he does the virtuous pagans, with frank admiration. The lofty figure of Farinata is portrayed with the same sympathy, not to say partiality, with which Milton draws his imposing Satan. The Poet's attitude is much the same towards Ulysses (Canto xxii).*

I. 13. Epicurus, not being a Christian, was no more a heretic than were the other great pagans. The statement must be attributed to Virgil with deliberate purpose. That Dante's philosophic guide should be baffled in the Circle of Heresy is of deep significance.

I. 36. How an ideal, a purpose, a great hope, or even a poignant remembrance, can make a man superior to fate!

II. 52-72. The personage by the side of Farinata is the father of Guido Cavalcanti. Guido, who was Dante's intimate friend, seems to have belonged to that Florentine type of the lofty-minded, cultivated, able, somewhat sceptical patrician, of which Lorenzo il Magnifico is the most conspicuous example. The broken spirit of the elder Cavalcanti here sets the superb figure of Farinata in relief. It is significant also that the families were related by the marriage of Guido very early in life to the daughter of Farinata. As Messer Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti was a Guelf patrician, it was vainly hoped by such a politic marriage to bring about peace if not union between the factions.

II. 79-81. 'The Lady reigning here' is Proserpina, queen of Erebus—night's Plutonian shore—here identified with the moon. Before fifty moons shall have waxed and waned Dante will have had painful experience of the difficult art of returning from exile. In answer to Dante's question concerning this and other dark prophecies about his life, his great kinsman Cacciaguida in the Heaven of Mars discourses of the Poet's exile (*Paradiso xvii*).

II. 85-7. The bloody battle of Montaperti, near Siena, in 1260, where the Florentine Guelphs were utterly put to rout by the Sienese and the Florentine Ghibellines under the leadership of Farinata.

II. 91-3. But for the opposition of Farinata, Florence would have been destroyed after Montaperti. The Florentine Guelphs rewarded their saviour with the blackest ingratitude, treating the whole Uberti clan with rigour unexampled even in those cruel times.

*ll. 63-107.* They can perceive, but are unaware of present conditions on earth. *Canto xx.* ll. 52-3.

*I. 110.* Dante addresses both Facinata and the father of Guido Cavalcanti with the respectful 'voi', 'your'. For the great significance of that, see the first dozen lines of *Purgatorio* vi.

*I. 119.* The Emperor, whom Dante often speaks and whom he admires greatly, and the Cardinal Ottaviano of the Ubaldini, who said, when about to die: 'If there be a soul, I have lost mine a thousand times for the Ghibellines.' He had looked at the Gospels! The mere reference to him implies the fact that he was the outstanding prelate of his age, although never attaining the papal dignity. The Ubaldini were, perhaps, after the Aldobrandeschi, the most powerful Ghibelline clan in Tuscany.

## CANTO XI

*Classes of Sins and Distribution of the Damned*

- 1 Upon an eminence with margin steep,  
formed by rock-masses in a circle rent,  
we came above a still more cruel deep.
- 4 And here, by reason of the horrible scent  
that was belched forth from the profound abyss,  
behind the lid of a great monument
- 7 We stood aside, and saw inscribed on this:  
'I hold within Pope Anastasius,  
he whom Photinus led to go amiss.'
- 10 'We must delay our going down, that thus  
a little more familiar to the sense,  
the dismal blast no longer trouble us.'
- 13 The Master thus; and I: 'Some recompense  
do thou devise to balance this delay,  
lest time be lost.'—'My very thought!' he assents.
- 16 'My son, within these rocks,' began he say,  
'from grade to grade three lesser circles wind,  
like those above from which we come away.'
- 19 All swarm with cursed souls of humankind:  
but that the sight alone suffice from hence,  
learn how and wherefore they are thus confined.
- 22 Of every malice that gives Heaven offence,  
injury is the aim; such aim again  
grieves others or by Fraud or Violence.
- 25 But because Fraud is man's peculiar bane,  
God loathes it more; and so the fraudulent  
are placed beneath, assailed with greater pain.
- 28 The whole First Circle is for the violent:  
but since to persons threefold force is donec,  
in triple rounds it has apportionment.
- 31 To God, to neighbour, and to self, can one  
do violence: I say, their property  
and them,—as thou shalt hear made clearly known.
- 34 By violence, death and grievous wounds may be  
dealt to one's neighbour; to his goods and rights  
injury, arson, and rapacity:

- 37 Whence homicides and each who wrongly smites,  
marauders and freebooters, all their train  
the foremost rondure plagues in various plights.
- 40 A man may lay a violent hand again  
on self and on his goods: wherefore below  
in the second rondure must repent in vain
- 43 Whoso deprives him of your world, whoso  
gambles and dissipates his affluence,  
and comes to grief where he should jocund go.
- 46 The Deity may suffer violence  
with heart's denial and with blasphemies,  
which Nature scorn, and His beneficence:
- 49 And hence the smallest rondure signet-wise  
stamps Sodom and Cahors, and all of those  
who, speaking from the heart, their God despise.
- 52 That Fraud whose gnawing every conscience knows,  
a man may use on others who confide,  
or on them who no confidence repose.
- 55 This latter method seems but to divide  
the link of love that in our nature is:  
whence in the Second Circle there reside
- 58 Wizards, hypocrisy, and flatteries,  
cheating, and simony, and thievishness,  
panders, and the like filth, and barratries.
- 61 In the other mode there lies forgetfulness  
of love which nature makes, and furthermore  
of what begets especial trustfulness:
- 64 Whence in the Smallest Circle, at the core  
• of the whole universe, and seat of Dis,  
whoso betrays is wasted evermore.'
- 67 'Master, thy reasoning of the abyss  
runs clear,' said I, 'defining what belongs  
to place, and to the folk possessing this.'
- 70 But tell me: of the fat lagoon the throngs,  
those the rain beats upon, those tempest-led,  
those who encounter with such bitter tongues,
- 73 Wherefore are they within the City red  
not punished, if the wrath of God they bide?  
if otherwise, then wherefore so bestead?'

- 76 'Why wandereth thine intellect so wide  
beyond the wonted mark?' he said, 'or what  
hath thine attention elsewhere occupied?
- 79 Hast thou the tenor of those words forgot  
wherewith thine Ethics thoroughly explain  
the vices three that Heaven endureth not,—
- 82 Incontinence, and malice, and insane  
bestiality? and how incontinence  
less angers God, and less doth censure gain?
- 85 If thou consider well this evidence,  
and what they are recall to memory,  
who up outside are bearing punishments,
- 88 Thou wilt discern why they divided be  
from all these felons, why God's hammers smite  
upon them somewhat less avengingly.'
- 91 'O Sun! thou healer of all troubled sight,  
so gladdens me thy bringing truth to view,  
that doubt no less than knowledge is delight.
- 94 Yet turn a little back,' said I, 'pursue  
thy argument that usury offends  
divine beneficence,—that knot undo.'
- 97 'Philosophy,' said he, 'if one attends,  
not merely in one passage has defined  
how Nature in her origin descends
- 100 From art Divine, and from the Master Mind;  
and if unto thy Physics thou refer,  
after not many pages wilt thou find
- 103 That your art, as it can, pursueth her,  
as the disciple doth the master; so  
that your art is God's grandchild, as it were. .
- 106 To these twain, if thy memory backward go  
to Genesis where it begins, perforce  
must men their life and their advantage owe.
- 109 Since usurers adopt another course,  
they Nature and her follower disdain,  
because they draw their hope from other source.
- 112 But follow, for the journey am I fain:  
the Fishes on the horizon writhe by this,  
while wholly over Gaurus lies the Wain,
- 115 And yonder far descends the precipice.'

## NOTES

I. 3. This is the Seventh Circle (of the Violent), which we enter in Canto xii.

I. 8. An echo of the disputes about the nature of Christ which rent the ancient church and which still persists. The story is that Pope Anastasius II was too friendly to the person and too tolerant of the doctrine of the monophysite deacon Photinus. There is another echo of this baneful controversy in *Par. vi* (ll. 13 ff.). To question the orthodox view that there are two natures, divine and human, united in Christ, was anathema.

I. 17. Lesser circles, because Hell narrows funnel-wise, but still vast spaces. We have seen, outside the City of Dis, the punishments of the Incontinent; we are next to traverse the three rounds or rings of the Violent (Cantos xii to xvii), composing the First Circle (seventh of the whole). At the end of Canto xvii we descend by a living airship to Evil-pouches, ten in number, where as many varieties of Fraud are punished (Cantos xviii to xxx). These all belong to the Eighth Circle from the beginning. The final Cantos (xxxii to xxxiv) deal with Treacherous Fraud punished in the Ninth Circle of the whole, called Cocytus.—The classification of the Heretics (Canto x) is left undetermined.

I. 39. *Fourmest Rondure*, i.e., first Round or Ring of the great plain of the First Circle of the Violent (seventh of the whole).

I. 42. Second Rondure, encircled by the first.

I. 49. Smallest Rondure, because surrounded by the second.

I. 50. Cahors, in South Central France, was a noted seat of usury. The attitude of Dante toward usury is the result of a prejudice which is traceable back to Aristotle and which propagated itself until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Turgot gave it the *coup de grâce*. Dante, indeed, failed to read correctly some of the economic signs of his own time.

I. 57. Second Circle (or eighth of all Hell) is Malebolge (Malpouches). Eight of the classes punished in these ditches are enumerated here, the others being evil counsellors and sowers of discord.

I. 64. Smallest Circle—ninth of Hell—the ultimate Pit at bottom of which Dis (Satan) stands at the centre of the earth, like a monstrous worm at the core of the whole Creation.

*l.* 80. Thine Ethics—the Ethics of thy master Aristotle. This is an elaborate, scholastic way of pointing out that sins of impulse, due to want of self-control, are less heinous than those of malignant intention.

*l.* 82. The classification of sins is clear. The significance of the quite different classification in *Purgatorio* will be pointed out in a note to *Purg.* xvii.

*l.* 97. The argument about usury, and the classification of this with sodomy, so strange and repellent to us, is a notable example of that scholastic reasoning imposed upon Dante by the leaders of thought in his time, to whom the authority of 'the master of those who know' was little less sacred than that of Holy Writ.

*l.* 113. This is an elaborate way of saying that it is an hour or two before sunrise. The Fishes are on the morning horizon, the Ram (with the sun) just below it, the Wain (Septentrion, 'Dipper') is with the northwest wind (Caurus).

*l.* 115. This and Canto vi are the shortest in the Poem. The average length is a little over 142 lines. On the other hand, the penultimate Canto (xxxiii) is the longest of the *Inferno*, as the penultimate of *Purgatorio* (xxxii) is longest of the whole Poem (160 lines).

The correspondence everywhere traceable between sins and penalties can only be meant to suggest that the awful imagery is but a shadow of spiritual experience. The hint is put, for example, into the mouth of poor Francesca. It is no physical agony that extorts the moan, 'Nessun maggior dolore' (v. 121). That the tortures of Hell are mental is told, as only poetry can tell it, by the attitudes as well as the words of Farinata and Cavalcante and a hundred others whom the reader is to meet. Dante had no need to cry with Marlowe: 'Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it!'; nor with Milton, 'Myself am Hell'; nor with Swinburne,

'The heart is the prey of the gods  
Who crucify hearts, not hands.'

## CANTO XII

*Seventh Circle: Ring I. Those Violent Against Neighbours*

- 1 The place we came to that we might descend  
    was alpine, what beside was on that bank  
        was such that it would every eye offend.
- 4 Such as that rock-fall which upon the flank  
    struck on the Adige, this side of Trent,  
        whether by earthquake or support that sank;
- 7 For, from the summit whence the ruin went,  
    down to the plain, the cliff has fallen between,  
        so from above there might be some descent;
- 10 Such was the causeway into that ravine:  
    and on the border of the rugged brow  
        the infamy of Crete was prostrate seen,
- 13 That was conceived in the fictitious cow:  
    he bit himself, when eyes on us he laid,  
        subdued within by anger. 'Haply thou,'
- 16 My Master sage toward him shouting said,  
    'believest here the Duke of Athens, who  
        up in the world of mortals struck thee dead?
- 19 Monster, begone! for guided by no clue  
    given by thy sister, comes this man below,  
        but passes by, your punishments to view.'
- 22 Just as the bull that feels the deadly blow,  
    breaks from his halter, and not very far  
        can move, but merely plunges to and fro:
- 25 So doing I beheld the Minotaur.  
    'Run!' cried my Master, who the passage showed,  
        'while he is raging, hasten down the scar.'
- 28 Thus downward we, our way pursuing, trode  
    that dump of stones, which often as I went  
        moved 'neath my feet, so novel was the load.
- 31 I musing passed. And he: 'Thou art intent  
    perhaps upon this ruin, sentinelled  
        by that brute wrath, now rendered impotent.
- 34 Now I would have thee know, that when I held  
    my first course hither to the deep abyss,  
        this mass of rock had not as yet been felled.

- 37 But certainly, discern I not amiss,  
     a little ere He came who mighty prey  
     from the upper circle levied upon Dis,
- 40 The deep and loathsome valley every way  
     so trembled, that the Universe, I thought,  
     was thrilled with love, whereby there are who say
- 43 The world was many a time to chaos brought:  
     and in that moment, here and elsewhere, thus  
     upon this ancient crag was ruin wrought.
- 46 But fix thine eyes below; for neareth us  
     the river of blood, wherein all boiling be  
     who were by force to men injurious.'
- 49 O wicked, blind, and mad cupidity,  
     that in our brief existence spurs us so,  
     and in the eternal steeps so bitterly!
- 52 I saw a wide moat curved into a bow  
     and such that it doth all the plain embrace,  
     according as my Guide had let me know.
- 55 Between it and the precipice did race  
     Centaurs in file with arrows, as of yore  
     it was their wont on earth to follow chase.
- 58 Seeing us coming down, they moved no more:  
     and three detached themselves from out the row,  
     with bows and with long arrows, chosen before.
- 61 And from afar one shouted: 'To what woe  
     descending thus the precipice come ye?  
     Tell it from thence; if not, I draw the bow.'
- 64 My Master answered: 'Our reply will be  
     to Chiron yonder at close quarters made:  
     thus ever rash thy will, the worse for thee!'
- 67 'That one is Nessus,' nudging me he said,  
     'who died because of Dejanira fair,  
     and for himself, himself his vengeance paid.
- 70 And gazing on his breast between the pair  
     is mighty Chiron who Achilles taught:  
     Pholus the wrathful is the other there.
- 73 By thousands go they round the fosse about,  
     piercing with darts whatever soul withdraw  
     from out the blood, more than its crime allot.'

- 76 Nearing those fleet wild animals, we saw  
Chiron take up a shaft and with the notch  
he ruffled back his beard behind his jaw.
- 79 When his huge mouth he had uncovered, 'Watch!  
are ye aware,' thus to his mates he said,  
'that he behind moves whatso'er he touch?
- 82 Not so are wont the footfalls of the dead.'  
And my good Leader, level with his breast  
where the two natures are together wed,
- 85 Replied: 'Indeed he lives, and by behest  
alone I show him thus the dark defile:  
necessity, not choice, impels the quest.
- 88 From singing Alleluia paused awhile  
one who commits to me this office new;  
he is no robber, I no spirit vile.
- 91 But by that Virtue which gives motion to  
my feet along so wild a thoroughfare,  
give us for escort any one of you,
- 94 That he may show us where to ford, and bear  
this man upon his back across the tide:  
for 'tis no spirit that can walk the air.'
- 97 'Turn about, Nessus, so to be their guide,'  
said Chiron, round upon his right breast bent,  
'if other troop encounter, warn aside.'
- 100 Together with the trusty guide we went  
along the boiling of the crimson flood,  
wherein the boiled were making loud lament.
- 103 I saw who plunged there to the eyebrows stood:  
'Once these,' the Centaur great took up the tale,  
'were tyrants steeped in pillage and in blood.'
- 106 The ruthless wrongs they wrought they here bewail ,  
here Alexander, fell Dionysius who  
made woeful years in Sicily prevail;
- 109 And yonder brow with hair so black of hue  
is Ezzelin; that other, fair of face,  
Obizzo of Este, whom his bastard slew
- 112 Up in the world, to truly state the case.'  
Then turned I to the Poet, and he said:  
'Give him the first and me the second place.'

- 115 A little farther on the Centaur led  
and paused above a folk whose evil fate  
plunged them throat-high within that boiling red
- 118 He showed a shade alone and separate,  
saying: 'That spirit clest within God's breast  
the heart that still by Thames they venerate.'
- 121 Then saw I people who with head and chest  
wholly uplifted from the river stood;  
and many I recognized among the rest.
- 124 Thus evermore grew shallower that blood  
until it only cooked the feet: and lo!  
here was our passageway across the flood.
- 127 'Just as thou seest the boiling river grow  
still lower on the farther side, and lower.'  
the Centaur said, 'so I will have thee know
- 130 That on this other, with a circling shore  
its bottom sinks, until it makes its way  
where tyranny must groan for evermore.
- 133 Justice divine here goads that Attila  
who was a scourge upon the earth, and stings  
Pyrrhus and Sextus, and milks forth for aye'
- 136 From Rinier of Corneto tears, and wrings  
hot tears from Rinier Pazzo,—Riniers twain  
who on the highways wrought such plunderings.'
- 139 Back then he turned and passed the ford again.

## NOTES

ll. 1-3. Plunged more or less deeply in Phlegethon, river of boiling blood.

l. 4. This interesting rock-fall, called Slavini di Marco, is in the defile through which the Adige passes near Roveredo. The brief geological explanation (l. 6) is due to Albertus Magnus, the Universal Doctor, who died when Dante was a youth and is one of the great circle of lights of *Par. x.*

ll. 12 ff. The Minotaur, symbol of violence, the more bestial for being half human. The symbolic union of Pasiphaë and the bull is twice referred to in *Purg. xxvi.* The Minotaur is the fit guardian of the entrance to this region of Hell, where sins of violence and bestiality are punished. Theseus is called Duke of Athens also by Shakespeare.

l. 20. Ariadne.

l. 22. Probably referring to a sacrifice.

l. 30. The movement of the stones beneath the physical weight of the living body does not escape notice as we shall see. This is one of a hundred observations that show our Poet to be familiar with mountain-climbing.

l. 34. As explained near the beginning of Canto ix.

l. 37. Cf. Canto iv, ll. 52 ff.

l. 42. He who said so was Empedocles. Possibly Dante means to hint that love in Hell would be, locally at least, a disorganizing force.

l. 52. Now we are looking down upon the edge of the great plain skirted by the boiling river of blood, beyond which the wood of the suicides lies around the great sand-waste, as explained at the beginning of Canto xiv.

ll. 55-87. The centaurs, like the Minotaur, half beast and half human, are equally appropriate watchmen here. The Poet evidently feels the essentially noble poetic nature of the centaur. Dante does not allow condemnation to eternal punishment to prejudice him illiberally against the inmates of Hell, whether centaur or human.

ll. 88-9. Beatrice.

ll. 103-20. Of the violent here the two most interesting to us are Ezzelino da Romano, called a 'firebrand' by his sister, the blessed Cunizza, whom we shall meet in the Heaven of Venus; and Guy de Montfort, who slew in church at Viterbo the young English prince, Henry of Cornwall, innocent victim of vendetta. To mention Alexander and the tyrant of Syracuse

alongside of modern tyrants is an example of the Poet's outlook *sub specie aeternitatis*. Orosius, whom we shall meet among the sapient souls in the Heaven of the Sun, who was regarded as a great historical authority, enlarging upon the cruelty of Alexander, had given justification to Dante for placing the conqueror here. Elsewhere Dante praises Alexander for liberality. Cf. the case of the emperor, Frederick II (Canto x, l. 119).

ll. 118-20. Guy (Guido) de Montfort, mentioned in the preceding note, is son of that Simon de Montfort who played so important a role in the time of Henry III of England. Simon, 'protector gentis angliae,' had been slain at the Battle of Evesham, where Prince Edward (later Edward I) led the opposing royalist forces. Since Guy cannot get at Edward, he takes the life of Henry, who was cousin to both of them. Villani reports that the heart of the victim was set in a golden cup on a column at the head of London Bridge. Crimes combining violence with sacrilege were regarded with especial horror; hence this miscreant is set apart from the others.

l. 126 (and compare ll. 67 and 97, together with the context of each). Dejanira, wife of Hercules, was riding the Centaur, Nessus, across a river, when he was overpowered by that passion for her which ended so disastrously for all concerned. Ovid's remark that Nessus was *scitus radorum* (acquainted with fords) made the choice of him for such an office the more suitable. The thought of riding the same great horse that had once carried a lady so long celebrated must have been rather fascinating to the Poet (Ovid, *Metam.*, ix).

ll. 135-8. Sextus Pompeius and Pyrrhus, alias Neoptolemus, son of Achilles and Deidamia. His violence and cruelty are brought out by Virgil in the account of the sack of Troy. (*Aeneid*, Bk. II, ll. 469 ff.) The two Rinieri were egregious robber chieftains of noble family, who patrolled the two roads from Tuscany to Rome. Rinier Pazzo is said to have been in the service of Frederick II in war against the Pope, and was perhaps not much worse than many other Ghibelline nobles whose castles commanded the routes of traffic.

## CANTO XIII

*Seventh Circle: Ring 2. The Suicidal Wood*

- 1 Not yet had Nessus gained the farther side,  
when we began to pass a forest through,  
wherein not any path could be descried.
- 4 Not green the foliage, but of dusky hue;  
not smooth the boughs, but gnarled and intricate;  
no fruits therein, but thorns with poison grew.
- 7 Those fierce wild animals that hold in hate  
tilled lands 'tween Cécina and Corneto, no  
thickets infest so dense and desolate.
- 10 Hither the loathsome Harpies nesting go,  
who drove the Trojans from the Strophades,  
with direful prophecy of coming woe.
- 13 Broad wings, and human face and neck have these,  
and feet with claws, huge belly feathered all;  
they utter rueful cries on the weird trees.
- 16 'Ere yet,' the Master good began withal,  
'thou tread the Second Round, consider well  
that here thou shalt employ the interval
- 19 Until thou comest to the sand-waste fell.  
So look aright, and there shall be descried  
things thou wouldst not believe, if I should tell.'
- 22 Thereat I wailings heard, on every side,  
and person who might utter them saw not:  
whence stood I still, completely mystified.
- 25 I think now that he thought perhaps I thought  
that through those trunks so many voices came  
from people who from us concealment sought.
- 28 Wherfore thus said the Master: 'If thou maim  
of any of these plants one little spray,  
the thoughts thou hast will all be rendered lame.'
- 31 Lifting my hand a little then, away  
a branchlet from a mighty thorn I tore;  
then did the trunk of it, lamenting, say:
- 34 'Why rendest thou?' Thereafter, dark with gore,  
began again to cry: 'Why mangle me?  
hast thou no spirit of pity then? Of yore

- 37 Men were we, and each now is turned to tree:  
     well might thy hand have shown itself more kind,  
     though souls of veritable serpents we.'
- 40 As out of a green brand, which burns behind,  
     and from the other side the drops exude,  
     the while it sputters with the escaping wind:
- 43 So from that broken sliver words and blood  
     were flowing forth together: whence I let  
     the tip fall down, and like one frightened stood.
- 46 'O wounded soul!' my Sage replied, 'if yet  
     before he had been able to believe  
     what he has only in my numbers met,
- 49 Thou wouldest not this offence from him receive;  
     the wonder of the thing made me advise  
     his doing that whereat myself I grieve.
- 52 But tell him who thou wast, so that in guise  
     of some amends, he yet may vindicate  
     thy fame on earth, where he again shall rise.'
- 55 The trunk: 'Thy honeyed words hold out such bait,  
     I cannot choose but speak; then let it be  
     not burdensome if I expatiate.
- 58 I am that one who held the double key  
     of Frederick's heart, and, turning both ways, knew  
     to lock and loosen with such suavity,
- 61 His confidence from others I withdrew:  
     to that high trust fidelity I bore,  
     losing my vigour and repose therethrough.
- 64 The harlot who yet never from the door  
     of Caesar's dwelling turned her wanton eyes,  
     the curse and bane of courts for evermore,
- 67 Inflamed all minds against me; in such wise  
     inflamed, they made Augustus flame again,  
     so that glad honours turned to dismal sighs.
- 70 My spirit, through her temper of disdain, .  
     believing to escape disdain by dying,  
     made me, though just, to self-injustice fain.
- 73 By the strange roots this thorn-tree underlying,  
     I swear to you I never forfeited  
     faith to my Lord, his honour magnifying.

- 76 If either of you yet the earth shall tread,  
    let him the memory of me restore,  
        still by the stroke of Envy prostrated.'
- 79 When he a little to discourse forbore,  
    the Poet said: 'Let not the moment go,  
        but speak and ask him what thou wouldest more.'
- 82 And I to him: 'Do thou entreat him show  
    what e'er thou thinkest may content my will,  
        for I cannot, for pity of his woe.'
- 85 Whence he resumed: 'So may the man fulfil  
    what thou hast prayed for, and full willingly,  
        imprisoned spirit, may it please thee still'
- 88 To tell us in what way the soul may be  
    bound in these knots; and tell, if licit, too,  
        if ever any from such limbs breaks free.'
- 91 The trunk a mighty suspiration blew,  
    whereon that wind was changed to voice like this:  
        'Brief the reply that shall be made to you.'
- 94 When the fierce spirit separates amiss  
    from out the body whence itself has torn,  
        Minos consigns to it the seventh abyss.
- 97 It falls into the forest, where no bourn  
    is chosen for it, but where chance may throw,  
        here it sprouts up, as doth a grain of corn;
- 100 Doth to a sapling and a wild tree grow:  
    the Harpies, browsing then its leafy crest,  
        cause woe, and give a window to the woe.
- 103 We shall go seek our bodies like the rest,  
    but with them never to be re-arrayed:  
        for 'tis not just to have what we divest.
- 106 Here shall we drag them, and the forest glade  
    shall see our bodies hanging dismally,  
        each on the thorn-tree of its injured shade.'
- 109 We were attentive still unto the tree,  
    thinking that haply it would tell us more,  
        when a tumult overtook us, so that we
- 112 Were like to one aware of hunt and boar  
    approaching to the place where he had stood,  
        who hears the branches crash the beasts before.

68 *The Black Dogs of the Wood of Phlegethon*

- 115 And now behold two spirits scratched and nude  
on the left hand, in flight so furious  
they broke through every barrier of the wood.
- 118 The first: 'Now hurry, hurry, Death to us!'  
And the next, who thought himself in speed outdone,  
was shouting: 'Lano, not alertly thus
- 121 Thy legs did at the jousts of Toppo run.'  
And haply for his breath too short he found,  
a thicket and himself he grouped as one.
- 124 After them, filling all the forests round,  
were running ravening bitches black, and fleet  
as, after slipping from the leash, the hound.
- 127 In him who cowered down their tushes meet,  
all into pieces rending him: again  
they bear away those limbs dilacerate.
- 130 Taking me by the hand, my Leader then  
led forward to the bush, with many a sigh  
lamenting through its bleeding wounds in vain.
- 133 'O James of Sant' Andrea,' was its cry,  
'of making me thy screen what is the good?  
for all thy wicked life what blame have I?'
- 136 The Master said when he beside it stood:  
'Who wast thou that, through wounds so numerous  
art blowing forth thy woeful words with blood?'
- 139 'O souls that hither come,' he said to us,  
'to view the shameful havoc that from me  
has rended all away my foliage thus,
- 142 Gather it up beneath the wretched tree.  
Mine was the town that her first patron for  
the Baptist changed: and for this reason lie
- 145 Will plague her with his art for evermore.  
And, were it not that still of him remain  
some features where men cross the Arno o'er.
- 148 Those citizens who built the town again  
upon the ashes left by Attila,  
would have performed the labour all in vain.
- 151 With mine own house I made myself away.'

## NOTES

*The violent against themselves (suicides) and against their goods (spendthrifts).*

I. 8. The Maremma, a district wild, marshy, malarial, along the Tuscan seaboard between the river Cécina and the town Corneto, its northern and southern landmarks. It is referred to repeatedly in the Poem, the enjoyment of which is greatly enhanced by familiarity with the map of Italy.

II. 28-45. Dante adapts to his purpose the strange tale of Polydore (*Aeneid*, Bk. III, from l. 22). Polydore had been murdered by Polymestor (*Purg.* xx. 115) for the treasure with which the young prince had been sent from Troy just before its fall. Cast upon the seashore, the body was covered with sand, and the javelins which had been left in the wounds sprouted up as myrtle and cornel shoots. When Aeneas begins to pluck these shafts, preparatory to a sacrificial rite, first blood issues and then the voice of the murdered prince.—Our Poet is therefore here an imitator—at least his inventive power is less independent than usual.

I. 48. In the *Aeneid*, Book III.

I. 58. The shade of Pier delle Vigne, chancellor and confidant of the great Emperor Frederick, and an able and eloquent man whose letters may still be read. Perhaps it is out of homage to him as a stylist that Dante makes him tell his story in so ornate a manner. Homage is done to the illustrious man by allowing him to speak at length—forty-five lines, much for Dante. The other chief speakers in Hell, apart from Virgil and Dante himself, are Francesca, Farinata, Ser Brunetto, Ulysses, Guido of Montefeltro, Master Adam, Ugolino. Of these, all save Farinata, speak at greater length than Francesca, whose immortal lines number less than forty.

Inasmuch as Dante deemed the *apologia* of Pier (Peter) delle Vigne worthy of a space relatively so large, possibly some readers may be willing to hear a very little more about this great figure. As Logothete (i.e. Chancellor) of Sicily, then the most civilized kingdom in Europe, and as Protonotary of the Empire, Peter was easily the most important administrative officer of the Western World. In other ways also he acted as confidential agent and adviser to Frederick of Hohenstaufen. He seems to have been the driving force in the compilation of the *Liber Augustalis*—the first medieval codification of the

Roman Law—a code which the magnanimous Frederick liberalized in important directions. Peter went to England to negotiate the marriage of the Emperor with Isabella, sister of Henry III. His final fall was as sudden and fatal as that of Wolsey, three centuries later. In the heart of Frederick there were chambers of which the keys were entrusted to none.

*l. 64.* The harlot is in line 78 called Envy (*invidia*). Chaucer translating this passage in the Legend of Good Women (lines 358–60), calls her 'lavender of the court', i.e. according to Skat, 'laundress'!

*ll. 120–42.* This Lano is said to have been a member of the Spending Club (*Brigata Spendereccia*) of Siena, described in Canto xxix. Having spent his wealth speedily, he flung himself upon certain death when ambushed in the engagement at the ford of Toppo over the river Chiana. The other spirit who provokes the remonstrance of the bush, James of Sant' Andrea, was a Paduan spendthrift of extraordinary ingenuity in shortening his *peau de chagrin*. The speaker in the bush was a judge of Florence, one Lotto of the Agli family, whose stately tower still stands in a suburb of Florence.

*l. 143.* It was a characteristic popular superstition at Florence that the continual strife that raged there was due to the jealousy of the ancient patron god, Mars. The present Baptistry, the old Cathedral, was pretty certainly built on the foundation of an ancient temple of Mars. Compare the significant reference to the maleficence of the mutilated statue of the god on the Ponte Vecchio (*Par. xvi*, near end of Canto).

## CANTO XIV

*Seventh Circle: Ring 3. Defiers of God*

- 1 Because for native country reverent,  
perforce I gathered up the scattered leaves  
and gave them back to him, whose voice was spent.
- 4 Thence came we to the boundary which cleaves  
the Second Rondure from the Third, where dread  
mode of eternal justice one perceives.
- 7 To show the new things clearly, be it said  
that we arrived upon a desert plain  
which banishes all plants from off its bed.
- 10 The woeful wood enwreathes it, as again  
the dismal moat encloses that around:  
here, hard upon the verge, did we remain.
- 13 An arid and dense sand composed the ground,  
nor was it formed and fashioned otherhow  
than that of old where Cato footed sound.
- 16 Vengeance of God! O how much oughtest thou  
by every person to be held in awe  
who reads that which was manifested now!
- 19 Manifold flocks of naked souls I saw  
who all did woesful lamentations pour,  
and they seemed subject unto diverse law.
- 22 Supine were lying some upon the floor,  
and some were sitting all together bent,  
and others went about for evermore.
- 25 The more were those who round about there went,  
and fewer those who lay in torment low,  
but had their tongues more loosened to lament.
- 28 Above that waste of sand, descending slow;  
rained everywhere dilated flakes of fire,  
as upon Alps, without a wind, the snow.
- 31 As Alexander, where the heat is dire  
in India, upon his host beheld  
flames fall, as far as to the ground entire;
- 34 Whereat he with his legions was compelled  
to trample down the soil, for better so  
the flames, remaining single, could be quelled:

- 37 Such was descending the eternal glow;  
     whereby, like tinder under steel, the sands  
     were kindled for redoubling of the woe.
- 40 Forever tossing were the wretched hands  
     now hither and now thither without rest,  
     fanning fresh burning off in counter-dance.
- 43 'Master,' began I, 'thou who conquerest  
     all things except the stubborn demon train  
     that from the gate against our entering pressed,
- 46 Who is the mighty one that in disdain  
     lies scowling, nor appears the fire to dread,  
     so that he seems unripened by the rain?'
- 49 And that same one, perceiving what I said  
     in question to my Guide of him, did shout:  
     'What once I was alive, that am I dead.
- 52 Should Jupiter his blacksmith weary out,  
     from whom the sharpened thunderbolt he tore  
     wrathful, and me upon my last day smote;
- 55 Or weary out the others o'er and o'er  
     in Mongibello at the stithy swart,  
     crying, "Help, help, good Vulcan", as of yore
- 58 On Phlegra's battlefield; and should he dart  
     his bolts at me with vigour multiplied,  
     that vengeance never should make glad his heart.'
- 61 My Leader then with so much strength replied  
     that I had never heard his voice so great:  
     'O thou Capaneus, just because thy pride
- 64 Remains unquenched, the woefuller thy fate:  
     no torment save thy very rage would be  
     unto thy fury pain proportionate!'
- 67 Then with a better look he turn'd to me:  
     'That one was of the seven monarchs who  
     laid siege to Thebes; he held and seemingly
- 70 Holds God in scorn, and gives contempt to view:  
     but, as I said to him, his spiteful mood  
     is for his breast adornment very due.
- 73 Now follow me, and let thy heed be good  
     not on the burning sand thy feet to set,  
     but keep them ever back, close to the wood.'

- 75 In silence came we where a rivulet  
gushes from out the wood: a rill so red  
that thinking of it makes me shudder yet.
- 79 As from the Bulicame there takes head  
a brooklet which the sinful women share,  
so this ran down across the sandy bed.
- 82 The bottom and both shelving banksides were  
hardened to stone, and the margins at the side.  
whence I perceived our passageway was there.
- 85 'Among all other things by thee descried  
through me, since entering within the gate  
whose threshold unto no one is denied,
- 88 Thine eyes not anything yet contemplate  
noteworthy as the present stream, which quite  
doth all the flames above it suffocate.'
- 91 This language of my Leader did incite  
petition from me that he let me taste  
the food for which he lent the appetite.
- 94 'In the mid-sea there lies a country waste,'  
thereon he said, 'that bears the name of Crete,  
under whose king the world of old was chaste.'
- 97 There is a mountain, Ida, once the seat  
of laughing waters and of leafy shade;  
to-day it lies deserted and effete.
- 100 Once Rhea in this faithful cradle laid  
her son; and to conceal him should he raise  
his voice to weep, caused clamours to be made.
- 103 A tall old man within the mountain stays,  
who doth his back to Damietta hold,  
and upon Rome, as in a mirror, gaze:
- 106 His head is fashioned of the finest gold,  
and of pure silver are the arms and breast,  
whence to the fork he is of brazen mould;
- 109 Thence downward all is iron, of the best,  
save the right foot of terra cotta, and more  
doth he on that than on the other rest.
- 112 Every part, except the golden ore,  
is broken by a cleft where tears distil,  
and, gathering, perforate that cavern floor.

- 115 They fall cascading to this valley,—fill  
dark Acheron and Styx and Phlegethon;  
then flow along this narrow channel, till  
118 They come where there is no more going down:  
they form Cocytus,—that pool shalt thou know  
by seeing: so be here description none.'
- 121 And I: 'If thus the present brooklet flow  
down from our world wherein its source is found,  
why does it only on this border show?'
- 124 And he to me: 'Thou knowest the place is round;  
and though thou comest from a distant place,  
still to the left toward the bottom bound,
- 127 Thou dost not yet the circle fully trace:  
wherefore if something novel comes to view,  
it ought not to bring wonder to thy face.'
- 130 'Where found is Phlegethon,' said I anew,  
'and Lethe? for of one thou'rt silent, Lord,  
and sayest the other to this rain is due.'
- 133 'Thy questions please,' he said, 'in every word,  
although the crimson brook's ebullience  
might well the answer unto one afford.
- 136 Lethe shalt see, but from this fosse far hence,  
there where to lave themselves the souls repair,  
when guilt has been removed by penitence.'
- 139 Then added he: 'The time is come to fare  
out of the wood: take heed thou follow me:  
the banks, not burning, form a thoroughfare,
- 142 And all the space above from flame is free.'

## NOTES

*The dreadful waste of sand (orribil sabbione) pelted by the Sodomitic rain of fire.*

I. 8. Here at length, leaving the Suicidal Wood infested by filthy harpies and fierce black dogs, we emerge upon the sand-waste, to the dwellers in which the next four Cantos are devoted.

I. 15. Cato of Utica, who led the retreat of Pompey's army across the desert (*Lucan, Pharsalia*, Bk. x). We shall meet him on the shore of the Purgatorial island.

II. 22-5. The violent against God are flat on their backs; the violent against art (usurers) are sitting crouched over their money-bags; the violent against nature (guilty of unnatural sexual indulgence) are incessantly roving.—There is, unfortunately, too much testimony, and by no means only in Dante, that the violent practices against nature, known as the 'sin of Sodom', were exceedingly common in the middle ages, especially among the clergy and the literary class.

II. 31-6. Legends of Alexander and buildings attributed to him are still extant in the Punjab. Dante was probably influenced by his historical authority, Orosius, to omit Alexander from his enumeration of illustrious Pagans (Canto iv), although in the *Contrivio* (iv-xi) Alexander is praised for liberality, along with Saladin, whom we saw in Canto iv, and Bertran de Born whom we shall meet in Canto xxviii.

I. 56. Mongibello is another name for Etna, where the Cyclopes had their forge. The word Gibello, itself meaning mountain, is a memorial of the Saracen occupation of Sicily (Arabic *Jebel*).

I. 58. Phlegra, scene of the attempt of the giants to scale Olympus.

I. 70. Capaneus defied Jove—whom Dante here apparently identifies with God, as he does again in Canto xxxi, and in *Purg.* vi. It is true these other instances are more purely poetical; here an interesting theological question might be raised.

I. 79. Bulicamë: name of a hot mineral spring at Viterbo, from which water seems to have been conducted to the houses of unfortunate women.

I. 103. The tall old man in the cavern of the Cretan Mount Ida seems to symbolize historically the human race facing

westward, its tears supplying the rivers of Hell. The cleft is the result of the Fall of Man; hence these tears. The golden age is of course before the Fall. The image is copied from that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the Book of Daniel. The reader may amuse himself by tracing the interesting symbolism in detail. Crete, by its central geographical position as well as by its place in the history of culture, is a well-selected site for such an emblem.

*I.* 126. Lesthand turns are the rule in Hell; the reverse is the rule in Purgatory.

*II.* 130-5. Our Poet, like Shakespeare, turns every scrap of knowledge to account. Being unacquainted with Greek, he probably owes to Virgil his knowledge of the meaning of the word Phlegethon. Cf. *Aeneid*, Bk. vi, l. 550. There is an ancient gloss to l. 265 of the same book: 'Phlegetonta vocat ignem.' The present passage is an acknowledgement of indebtedness for this bit of linguistic lore. Virgil's reply is a courteous way of hinting to Dante that, aware of the meaning, he might have spared the question. In l. 132 the rain referred to is that of the tears of mankind collected in the Colossus of Crete. The hasty reader should not confuse this with the 'rain of fire' described early in this Canto.

*I.* 136. We shall encounter and pass Lethë after the great central passage of the Poem (*Purg.* xxxi).

## CANTO XV

*Seventh Circle: Ring 3. Dante Meets a Great Teacher*

- 1 Now bears us over one of the hard banks,  
and fumes above the brooklet, shading well,  
shelter from fire the water and the flanks.
- 4 As Flemings, who 'twixt Bruges and Wissant dwell,  
fearing the floodtides that upon them run,  
throw up the dike the ocean to repel,
- 7 And as by Brenta does the Paduan,  
his villas and his villages to spare  
before Carinthia ever feels the sun:
- 10 Of like formation those were fashioned there,  
though not so high nor of so broad a base  
the Master made them, whosoe'er he were.
- 13 We were so distant from the forest chase  
by this, that I could never have descried  
the spot, though backward I had turned my face;
- 16 And now we met along the margin side  
a company of spirits coming by,  
who each peered at us, as at eventide
- 19 Beneath new moon, we one another spy;  
and they were puckering their brows at us  
like an old tailor at the needle's eye.
- 22 By such a family inspected thus,  
well-known I proved to one of them, who caught  
my garment's hem, and cried: 'How marvellous!'
- 25 And when he stretched his arm, a glance I brought  
to bear so fixed upon his branded hue,  
that his scorched countenance prevented not
- 28 His recognition by my inner view;  
and to his visage bending down my head  
I answered: 'Ser Brunetto, is it You?'
- 31 'O son, let it displease thee not,' he said,  
if Brunetto Latino a little way  
turn back with thee and let the troop be sped.'
- 34 'For that,' said I, 'with all my heart I pray;  
and if you bid me sit, it shall be done,  
so he I go with do not say me nay.'

- 37 Then he: 'Whoever of this herd, O son,  
but pauses, then a hundred years must lie  
unfanned, when smites the fiery malison.'
- 40 Therefore pass on: I at thy skirts will hie,  
and then rejoin my fellows yonder wending  
while weeping their eternal penalty.'
- 43 I durst not from the causeway risk descending  
to a level with him, but in reverent mode  
beside him walked, my forehead humbly bending.
- 46 'What fortune,' he began, 'what fatal goad  
drives thee down here before the hour extreme,  
and who is this who teaches thee the road?'
- 49 'Up in the life serene,' I said to him,  
'ere to the middle term of manhood come,  
I found myself lost in a valley dim.'
- 52 But yestermorn I turned my face therefrom:  
this one appeared to me returning there,  
and leads me now along this pathway home.'
- 55 'If following thy star thou onward bear,  
thou canst not fail of glorious port,' he said,  
'if well discerned I in the life so fair:
- 58 And but that I was far too early dead,  
beholding Heaven so unto thee benign,  
I would thee in the work have comforted.
- 61 But that ungrateful populace malign,  
who came of yore down from Fiesolë,  
and savour still of mountain and of mine,
- 64 For thy good deeds will be thy enemy;  
and rightly: for 'mid crabbed sorbs confined,  
befits not the sweet fig to fructify.
- 67 Old rumour in the world reports them blind;  
a people envious, arrogant, and hard:  
take heed thou from their manners be refined.
- 70 Fortune reserves thee honour and reward,  
such that both parties yet will hungry go  
for thee: but far from goat shall be the sward.
- 73 Let the Fiesolan beasts their litter strow,  
rending themselves; nor let them touch the blade,  
if ever any on their dunghill grow,

- 76 Wherein may yet revive the holy seed  
of Romans,—those therein still resident  
when it became such nest of evil deed.'
- 79 'If all my prayer had found accomplishment,'  
replied I to him, 'not yet would you be  
from human nature placed in banishment:
- 82 For I have held in loving memory  
your kind paternal image, and now yearn  
for you, who in the world instructed me
- 85 From hour to hour how man becomes eterne:  
and while I am alive, it is but right  
men in my words my gratitude discern.
- 88 What you relate about my course, I write,  
and keep—with other text—for a Lady, who,  
if I attain her, can the gloss indite.
- 91 Thus much would I have manifest to you,  
that if so be my conscience do not frown,  
I am ready, whatsoever Fortune do.
- 94 Not newly is such hansel paid me down:  
therefore let twirling Fortune ply her wheel  
at pleasure, and his mattock ply the clown.'
- 97 Thereat my Master, back upon his heel  
turning toward the right, upon me bent  
his eyes; then said: 'Who notes it, listens well!'
- 100 Nor speaking less on that account, I went  
with Ser Brunetto on, and question made  
of his companions known and eminent.
- 103 'To know of some of them is well,' he said,  
'of others best be silent, for the time  
with so much speaking were too quickly sped.'
- 106 Know then, in brief, that all were clerks, sublime  
in their renown, and men of letters great,  
on earth polluted with the one same crime.
- 109 Priscian goes with yon troop disconsolate,  
and Francis of Accorso; who observes  
such vermin, might have seen that reprobate
- 112 Who, by the Servant of each one who serves,  
was banned from Arno to the Bacchiglion',  
where he laid by his ill-excited nerves.

- 115 Of more would I relate, but going on  
and speech can be no longer, for I see  
new smoke from the great sand uprising yon.
- 118 A people comes with whom I may not be;  
now to thy care my 'Treasure' be commended,  
where still I live, and crave not more of thee.'
- 121 Then, wheeling, it would seem that he contended  
the field with those who at Verona run  
for the green cloth; and well his pace he mended
- 124 More like the winner than the losing one.

## NOTES

*Traversing the horrible sand waste upon a dike of Phlegethon.*

I. 1. Upon the dike along the red rivulet of Phlegethon the Poets can pass safely, sheltered by certain fumes rising from the stream, as pointed out by Virgil in the last Canto, I. 90.

I. 4. Wissant, anciently a haven of importance near Cape Grisnez, west of the later town of Calais, marks the western border of the great countship of Flanders. Bruges, near the eastern end of the long Flemish dike, was perhaps the most prosperous city of the North, and was sometimes known as the Venice of the North. It was the seat of one of the principal Florentine factories. Both ports were used by the Florentines in their extensive commerce with England.

I. 9. That is before the snow melts upon the mountains in which it heads. The medieval Duchy of Carinthia extended westward to the headwaters of the Brenta, the river which passes near Padua and flows into the Venetian lagoon.

II. 30-6. Brunetto Latino (or Latini) was a distinguished citizen and man of letters who had powerfully influenced Dante in the latter's earlier years. Brunetto's principal work was written in French—*Le Livre dou Tresor*—a compilation of encyclopedic character held at that time in high esteem. Dante addresses him with the *Voi* (you), in token of profound respect, as he has so far addressed only the two Florentine worthies in Canto x (cf. note to x. 110).

I. 62. Fiesole is a very ancient city, with massive Etruscan remains and a Roman theatre, built on the lofty hill above Florence. In the commune of Fiesole are the immense quarries which furnished the material for the building of Etruscan and Roman Fiesole, as well as of Florence, to which the stone is still daily transported by cartloads. Ser Brunetto makes a sharp distinction between the descendants of the Roman colonists of Florence and the Fiesolans, rough and hard as their mountain and their rock.

I. 72. Both parties at Florence will have to go hungry for Dante, who will be safe at Ravenna under the powerful Guido Novello, 'the eagle of Polenta' (xxvii. 41).

I. 79. This tribute to Ser Brunetto exemplifies the detachment with which Dante distinguishes between his personal gratitude to a great intellectual guide and his reprobation of the sin which involves such punishment. As in the cases of

## Notes

Francesca, Farinata, and several others, our Poet exhibits pity, sympathy, veneration, even affection for the condemned.

*l.* 89. For Beatrice. The other text is the prophecy of Ciacco (Canto vi) and that of Farinata (Canto x). Some of the interpretation or gloss which Dante hopes for is supplied in *Par.* xvii by his great ancestor.

*l.* 106. In the middle ages most men of letters belonged to the clergy which, by reason of enforced celibacy, was peculiarly vulnerable to carnal temptation.

*l.* 109. Priscian is the famous grammarian of the sixth century. Francesco d'Accorso (or Accursi) was a legal adviser to the greatest of English Kings, Edward I (d. 1307).

*l.* 111. The work here translated 'vermin' (*tigna, pustule or scab of itch*) seems more applicable to the thoroughly contemptible bishop who, by the *servus servorum* Boniface VIII, was deposed at Florence and sent to Vicenza, where he soon died. Benvenuto speaks of him as bestial in stupidity as well as in morals. But he belonged to the powerful Mozzi family, his brother being an eminent jurist.

*l.* 122. The green cloth was the prize of a foot-race. Palio (pallium, cloth or cloak) is the name of the famous horse-races run to this day in the Campo of Siena.

## CANTO XVI

*Seventh Circle: Ring 3. Three Great Citizens of Florence*

- 1 I was already where we heard a sound  
such as the bees make in the hive, a hum  
of water falling into the next round;
- 4 Then did three shades together running come,  
quitting a passing company that went  
beneath the rain of the sharp martyrdom.
- 7 Approaching, in this cry their voices blent:  
'Stop thou, who by thy garb appearst to be  
some one from out our city pestilent.'
- 10 What sores flame-branded on their limbs, ah me!  
still recent ones and ancient, met my view:  
it grieves me for them yet in memory.
- 13 Their cries attention from my Teacher drew,  
who turned his face to me and said: 'Now stay:  
to such as these all courtesy is due;
- 16 And if it were not for the fiery spray  
the nature of the place darts, I should feel  
that thou wert better hurry, and not they.'
- 19 They re-began to dance the ancient reel  
soon as we paused, and, drawing near us so,  
all three resolved themselves into a wheel.
- 22 As champions stripped and oiled are wont to do,  
who for their grip and for their vantage look,  
before they ever bandy thrust and blow:
- 25 Thus, wheeling round, not one of them forsook  
the sight of me, so that in counterchase  
the neck and feet continual journey took.
- 28 'Ah! if the misery of this shifting place  
make us and our desires contemptible,'  
began one, 'and our black and blistered face,
- 31 Let our renown incline thy mind to tell  
who art thou that, with such security,  
trailest along thy living feet through Hell?
- 34 He treading in whose steps thou seëst me,  
excoriated though he be, and nude,  
was higher than thou thinkest in degree.

- 37 The grandson was he of Gualdrada good;  
 his name was Guido Guerra: much he planned  
 astutely, and his sword was likewise shrewd.
- 40 The other who behind me treads the sand,  
 Tegghiaio Aldobrandi is, whose fame  
 ought to be grateful in the upper land.
- 43 And I, thus put upon the cross with them,  
 was called James Rusticucci: that I grieve,  
 truly my savage wife is most to blame.'
- 46 If from the fire I could have had reprieve,  
 I should have flung me down to them below,  
 and think my Teacher would have given me leave.
- 49 But since I should have parcht and burnt me so,  
 terror availed to check the kindly thought  
 which prompted me to their embrace to go.
- 52 'Contempt,' began I, 'it indeed was not,  
 that your condition thrilled me with, but rue  
 so deep that it will not be soon forgot,
- 55 When this my Lord spake words to me, wherethrough  
 the expectation was within me stirred  
 that people might be coming such as you.
- 58 I am your fellow-townsman; every word  
 that told your honoured names and actions all,  
 with love I ever have rehearsed and heard.
- 61 I go for the sweet fruit, leaving the gall,—  
 fruit by the truthful Leader promised me:  
 but to the Centre first I needs must fall.'
- 64 'So may thy limbs long while directed be  
 by living soul,' that one thereon replied,  
 'and so may thy renown shine after thee,
- 67 Tell whether courtesy and valour abide  
 within our city as of wont, or thence  
 banished and altogether thrust aside?
- 70 For William Borsiere, who laments  
 of late with us, and goes with yonder train,  
 speaks that which much our misery augments
- 73 'The upstart people and the sudden gain  
 excess in thee and arrogance have bred,  
 O Florence, as thou findest to thy bane!'

- 76 Thus cried I out aloud with lifted head:  
and holding this for my reply, the three  
looked at each other, as when truth is said.
- 77 'If otherwhile so little costs it thee  
others to satisfy,' all answered then,  
'happy thou, speaking with impunity.'
- 82 Whence if, escaped this place of gloom, again  
returned to see the starry heavens fair,  
thou shalt rejoice to utter, "I have been,"
- 85 Pray speak of us unto the people there.'  
Then they took flight and, when the wheel was broken,  
their nimble legs appeared to wing the air.
- 88 No glib 'Amen' could ever have been spoken  
so quickly as their vanishing occurred,  
which for departing gave my Master token.
- 91 I followed, and but little way we stirred,  
before so near us was the water's sound  
that, speaking, we could hardly have been heard.
- 94 Even as that stream which holds its proper ground  
the first, from Monte Viso to the sea  
eastward, upon the Apennines' left bound,—
- 97 Stillwater called above, before it be  
precipitated to its lower bed,  
but of that name is vacant at Forlī,—
- 100 Above Saint Benedict from the mountain head  
goes bellowing down a single waterfall  
where for a thousand should be room instead:
- 103 Thus, leaping downward from a scarpèd wall,  
we heard that tinted water make such din,  
that it would soon have stunned the ear withal.
- 106 I had a cord that girt my garment in,  
for with it I had once thought requisite  
to take the leopard of the painted skin.
- 109 As soon as I had loosed it from me quite,  
to the commandment of my Guide submiss,  
I reached it to him, coiled and wound up tight.
- 112 Whereon he turned toward the right, and this,  
a little out beyond the verge, did fling  
down into that precipitous abyss.

- 115 'Now surely it must be that some new thing,'  
I said within, 'answer the signal new  
which thus the Master's eye is following.'
- 118 Ah me! how cautious should men be and do  
near those who witness not alone the deeds,  
but with their wisdom to the thoughts look through!
- 121 He said to me: 'What I expect must needs  
come upward soon, and what thy dreams now ask  
must soon be such that very eyesight heeds.'
- 124 Aye to that truth concealed beneath false mask,  
a man should close his lips, if in him lies,  
lest he, though blameless, should be brought to task;
- 127 But here I cannot: by the harmonies  
of this my Comedy, Reader, I swear,  
so may their grace be lasting, that mine eyes
- 130 Saw through the gross and gloomy atmosphere  
a shape come swimming up, of such as be  
to every steadfast heart a thing of fear:
- 133 As he returns who sometimes dives, to free  
the anchor-fluke, lest vessel come to harm  
on reef, or aught else hidden in the sea,
- 136 Who draws his foot in, and flings up his arm.

## NOTES

*More of the violent against Nature dancing under the pelting fire in the dreadful arena.*

I. 1. Byron in his noblest lyric recalls voices that 'sound like a distant torrent's fall'. Dante here tells what that sound is like.

I. 8. The garb in question is doubtless the distinctive and beautiful habit of the Florentine gentleman, as we see it in Giotto's portrait of young Dante in the Chapel of the Bargello.

I. 9. These patriots, like Dante himself, supremely love the city which they denounce. Torracca cites a still unpublished sermon, delivered in front of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in 1305, stigmatizing Florence as almost another Sodom.—In that church, the thoughtful pilgrim to Florence may like to know, still stands the contemporary cruciform monument of Dante's *maestro*, Brunetto Latino.

II. 19-27. It seems that these spirits cannot remit, as Ser Brunetto had done, the swift action of their limbs, and since all are equally eager to gaze at the apparition of a living man their movement is converted into the wheeling dance so vividly pictured. The nude and anointed champions are perhaps such as Virgil had described in the account of the games (*Aeneid*, Bk. III, ll. 281-2).

II. 28-45. These three worthies were distinguished citizens of Florence to whom Dante had looked up in his youth. Gualdrada was daughter of the ancient Bellincione Berti, described in *Par. xv* and *xvi*, and was ancestress of the Conti Guidi, a famous lineage. Her beauty and virtue are Florentine traditions. Aldobrandi counselled against the fatal expedition to Siena in 1260, resulting in the terrible defeat at Montapertu—a reason why Florence should honour him. In the excuse he makes for Rusticucci the Poet does not appear to be quite 'on the side of the angels'. No cloister in Hell seems set apart for shrews! For interesting tradition and gossip about these personages cf. Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary*.

I. 70. To him Boccaccio devotes one of the tales of the *Decameron* (I. 8), where he is described as a worthy well-bred witty gentleman.

II. 94-105. Monte Viso (Chaucer's 'Vesulus the colde') is at the head of the Po. The river here referred to, the Montone, was the first river north of the Apennines which had an independent course to the sea. Dante makes his geographical

references an element of poetry, as after him did Milton, to the waterfall of San Benedetto, it is now, owing to the deforesting of the Apennines, no longer very impressive. We know from familiar examples how erosion changes in the course of centuries the form and aspect of a waterfall. Of the various interpretations of l. 102, the simplest is that this is a heightened way of saying that the mass of water, forced through the narrow gorge, would have been sufficient to cover a much wider channel. The word 'thousand' is frequently used in the Poem for an indefinitely large number.

*l. 106.* The cord is supposed to be the girdle of St. Francis, who intended it as an emblem of the binding of the wild beast of the body. The old commentator, Buti, states that Dante was once a member of that order of Franciscans called, from the cord, Cordeliers. So the celebrated Guido da Montefeltro, who tells his dramatic story in Canto xxvii.

*ll. 127-9.* The superficial comment is that the poet takes oath to a fiction by a fiction. But there is a world of difference between fiction and falsehood. He swears to what he wishes us to accept as an emblem of a truth by what is to him dear and sacred: the Poem upon which he bases his hope of fame. Were it not for the spur which Milton calls 'that last infirmity of noble mind', how poor would be our culture and how unprofitable our annals!

## CANTO XVII

*Seventh Circle: Ring 3. The Wonderful Flight Downward*

- 1 'Behold the beast with pointed tail, whose guile  
doth mountains cleave and walls and weapons rend;  
behold him who doth all the world defile.'
- 4 So spoke to me my Leader and my friend;  
and that it come in shoreward beckoned it,  
near where the trodden marbles make an end.
- 7 Then forward came that filthy counterfeit  
image of Fraud to land its head and bust,  
but drew not up its tail from out the pit.
- 10 Its face was like the face of person just,  
so outwardly benignant was its hue,  
but like a serpent all the rest outthrust.
- 13 Paws shaggy to the armpits it had two;  
and many a painted nooselet, many a quirk  
the back, the breast, and both the flanks bestrew.
- 16 Never was cloth by Tartar woven or Turk,  
more variously coloured, warp and woof,  
nor yet such tissue did Arachne work.
- 19 As along shore the wherries lie aloof  
at times, in water part and part on land;  
and as the beaver in his hunt's behoof
- 22 Doth yonder 'mid the guzzling Germans stand:  
so lay that worst of beasts along the stone  
that forms the margin fencing in the sand.
- 25 All quivering in the void the tail was thrown,  
twisting aloft the point of it, that bare  
a venomed fork as in the scorpion.
- 28 'Now,' said my Leader, 'it behoves us fare  
somewhat aside, far as that maledight  
wild beast which couches on the border there.'
- 31 So therefore we, descending on the right,  
ten steps along the outer border pace,  
the sand and flakes of fire avoiding quite.
- 34 As soon as ever we have reached the place,  
a little farther on the sand I see  
a people sitting near the empty space.

- 37 'Of this third round,' the Master said to me,  
     'that thou mayst carry full experience.  
         go now, consider what their manners be.'
- 40 Out there concise must be thy conference:  
     I will persuade this brute his shoulders strong  
         to lend us, against thy returning thence.'
- 43 Thus farther yet, the utmost verge along  
     of that same Seventh Circle, did I go.  
         and all alone, where sat the sorry throng.
- 46 Out of their eyes is bursting forth their woe:  
     now here, now there, with hands they agonize  
         against the flames, against the soil aglow.
- 49 Dogs in the summer do not otherwise,  
     now with the paw and presently with snout,  
         at bite of fleas, of gadflies, or of flies.
- 52 When I had singled certain faces out  
     of those on whom the woeful fire is shed,  
         not one of them I knew; but slung about
- 55 Each neck perceived a pouch, emblazonèd  
     with certain hue and certain cognizance,  
         and therewithal, it seems, their eye is fed.
- 58 And as, among them looking, I advance,  
     beheld I *Azure* on a wallet *Or*,  
         bearing a lion's mien and countenance.
- 61 And as the sweep of vision onward bore,  
     another bag, blood-red, beheld I now  
         display a goose, as butter white, and more.
- 64 Then one upon whose wallet white a sow,  
     in brood and azure, was in blazon set,  
         exclaimed: 'Here in this ditch what doest thou?'
- 67 Now get thee gone: and since thou 'rt living yet,  
     know that my neighbour Vitaliano, here  
         upon my left-hand side a seat shall get.
- 70 A Paduan with these Florentines, mine ear  
     ofttimes they deafen, crying in each close,—  
         "Let him come down, the sovran cavalier
- 73 Who with the triple-beaked budget goes!"'  
     Here pursing up his mouth, he made display  
         of tongue, like cattle when they lick the nose.

- 76 And apprehensive lest my longer stay  
    displease him who had bid me little bide,  
    I turned me from those weary souls away.
- 79 On back of that fell beast I found my Guide  
    already mounted: 'Take good heed,' said he,  
    'that thou be steady and unterrified.'
- 82 Now by such flight of stairs descent must be:  
    mount thou in front, for I between will sit,  
    so that the tail may do no harm to thee.'
- 85 Like one about to have the ague fit  
    of quartan, blue of nail, all shuddering  
    at shadow, catching but the sight of it,—
- 88 Such I became, on hearing such a thing;  
    but his monitions wrought in me that shame  
    which makes brave servant before noble king.
- 91 I set myself upon that monstrous frame:  
    'Clasp me!' I tried to say, but utterance  
    refused to come, though I believed it came.
- 94 But he who otherwhile in other chance  
    assisted, with his arms encircled me  
    as soon as I had mounted. 'Now advance,
- 97 O Geryon! ample let thy wheelings be,'  
    he bade, 'and slow be thy descending here;  
    remember the new load that burdens thee.'
- 100 As draws a little vessel from her pier,  
    so, backing, backing, thence did Geryon draw;  
    and when he felt that he was wholly clear,
- 103 Turned tail to where before his breast I saw,  
    and tail outstretching, moved it like an eel,  
    and gathered in the air with play of paw.
- 106 No greater fear, I ween, did any feel,  
    when Phaëton, abandoning the rein,  
    branded the sky, as still the nights reveal;
- 109 Nor when poor Icarus perceived each pen  
    fall from his flank the molten wax withal,—  
    'Thy way is wild!' his father shouted then,—
- 112 Than mine, when I beheld me to be all  
    adrift in air, and saw extinguished so  
    every sight but of the animal.

- 115 He swims along, slow undulating, slow,  
    wheels and descends,—this could I but surmise  
        by wind upon my face, and from below.
- 118 Already on the right I heard arise  
    out of the cataract a frightful roar,  
        whence I outstretched my head with downward eyes.
- 121 Thereon the precipice dismayed me more,  
    for burning did I see and moaning hear,  
        whereat my thighs gripped closer than before.
- 124 Now I discerned, what first did not appear,  
    the sinking movement and the wheeling, by  
        great woes from every quarter drawing near.
- 127 Like falcon, overlong enforced to fly,  
    that without spying either bird or bait,  
        ‘Ah me, thou stoopest!’ makes the falconer cry,
- 130 Descending weary whence it sped elate,  
    alights, full many a circle having rounded,  
        far from its master, aloof, exasperate:
- 133 Hard by the cliff upon the bedrock founded,  
    thus Geryon set me down beside my Lord,  
        and, disencumbered of our persons, bounded
- 136 Up and away like arrow from the cord.

## NOTES

*The money-sharks of great family crouching over their emblazoned wallets.*

ll. 21-2. According to medieval bestiaries the beaver was in the habit of using its tail to strike and stun its prey.

The word *lurchi*, here translated 'guzzling', doubtless connotes both eating and drinking. Portia's unflattering description of 'the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew', would have delighted Dante (*Merchant of Venice*, i. ii.) The sober Tuscan was as much offended by intemperance in drink as Portia or Hamlet could have been.

ll. 52-7. See Canto vi, ll. 49-54, note.

ll. 58-73. These are the cognizances, respectively, of the Florentine families Gianfighazzi and Ubriachi, and of the Paduan family, Scrovigni, all degraded by the inordinate practice of usury. The shield of the Scrovigni is an example of canting heraldry, like the wild boar on the escutcheon of the Bacon family. Of Vitaliano nothing is surely known; apparently he was still alive. The 'sovran cavalier', supreme usurer, Giovanni Buiamonte of Florence, is also condemned while living.—These wretches are not Jewish Shylocks, but members of proud families of the nobility!

l. 74-5. The base and cruel practices incident to extortionate money-lending and collecting have blotted out, with the personal features, the sense of shame in this member of a proud family. Lost to personal dignity or decency, these money-grubbers are even more degraded than the traitors far below in the ice of Cocytus.

ll. 85-93. Dante is none the less brave for being thoroughly cared. The intrepidity of the unimaginative rash is but a low form of courage.

ll. 115-26. The Poet anticipates and faithfully describes the actual impressions of the modern aviator.

l. 136. Geryon is in every way the most dantesque of the symbolic creatures enumerated in the note, Canto v, l. 4. The locality of the monster, quelled by the cord of St. Francis, is of course allegorically significant. The cord seems to be a magic sign such as the cross traditionally is.

CANTO XVIII. Eighth Circle: Pouch 1. Panders and  
Seducers. Pouch 2. Flatterers

- 1 There is in Hell a region all of stone,  
    by name Malpouches, of an iron hue  
    like the precipitous encircling zone.
- 4 Right in the middle of the fell purlicue  
    there yawns a Pit, exceeding deep and wide,  
    whose structure I shall tell in order due.
- 7 The belt is therefore circular, outside  
    the Pit to foot of the high rocky steep,  
    and in its bottom valleys ten divide.
- 10 Of like configuration is that deep  
    as otherwhere, for safeguard of the wall,  
    several moats begird a castle-keep:
- 13 Such an appearance have these valleys all;  
    and as from thresholds of such fortalice  
    run to the outer rampart bridges small,
- 16 So from the bottom of the precipice  
    causeys across the banks and fosses run,  
    converging and cut short at the abyss.
- 19 Here, shaken from the back of Geryon,  
    we found ourselves: then took the Poet's feet  
    the leftward turn, and I behind moved on.
- 22 On the right hand, new sorrow did I meet,  
    new torments and new wielders of the thong,  
    wherewith the foremost pocket was replete.
- 25 The sinners naked at the bottom throng:  
    this side the middle come they facing me,  
    swifter, beyond, they stride with me along.
- 28 The Romans thus, in year of Jubilee,  
    to make the people pass the bridge devise,  
    by reason of the countless company,
- 31 So that on one side all direct their eyes  
    toward the Castle and Saint Peter's fane;  
    on the other toward the Hill their passage lies.
- 34 Hither and yon along the gloomy lane,  
    I saw horned demons with great whips, who dealt  
    behindward on them furious blows amain.

- 37 Ah! how these made them after the first peit  
lift up their heels! then truly waited none  
until the second or the third he felt.
- 40 While I was going on, mine eyes by one  
encountered were; and instantly I said:  
'For sight of him I have not hungry gone!'
- 43 Wherefore to make him out my feet I stayed;  
and my kind Leader, slackening his pace,  
consented to some steps I backward made.
- 46 And that scourged spirit, lowering his face,  
bethought to hide, but with small benefit;  
I saying: 'Thou that dost thine eyes abase,
- 49 Must, if those features are not counterfeit,  
*Venedico Caccianimico* be:  
but what brings thee to such a smarting pit?'
- 52 'Unwillingly I tell, though forced,' said he,  
'by thy explicit speech which brings the old  
foregone existence back to memory.'
- 55 To do the Marquis pleasure, I cajoled  
fair Ghisola,—in whatsoever way  
the shameful tale be peradventure told.
- 58 No lonely Bolognese I weep here: nay,  
for rather do we so this region fill,  
that not so many tongues are taught to say
- 61 *Sipa* 'twixt Savena and Reno; still  
if thou wouldest have me pledge or proof subjoin,  
recall to mind our avaricious will.'
- 64 While he was speaking thus, upon his loin  
a demon laid the lash, and said: 'Begone,  
pander, there are no women here to coin!'
- 67 I came back to mine Escort; and thercon  
few paces brought us where we could discern  
a craggy causey from the embankment run.
- 70 Ascending this full easily, we turn  
upon its jagged ridgeway to the right,  
departing from those circling walls eterne.
- 73 When came we where a gap beneath the height  
yawns for the sinners driven by the thong,  
my Leader said: 'Lay hold, until the sight

- 76 Strike on thee of another misborn throng,  
of whom thou hast not yet beheld the face  
because they still have gone with us along.'
- 79 From the old bridge we viewed the file, apace  
who neared us on the further side below,  
and whom the scourges in like manner chase.
- 82 Without my asking, the Good Master so  
addressed me: 'Yonder mighty one behold,  
who seems to shed no tear for all his woe:
- 85 How kingly is his bearing, as of old!  
'tis Jason, who by prowess and by guile  
despoiled the Colchians of the Fleece of Gold.
- 88 He skirted once the coast of Lemnos isle,  
after the merciless women unafraid  
devoted all their males to death erewhile.
- 91 There, with love-tokens and fair words, the maid  
Hypsipyle did he betray, that one  
who first, herself, had all the rest betrayed.
- 94 And there he left her, pregnant and alone:  
such guilt condemns him to such martyrdom,  
and for Medea too is vengeance done.
- 97 With him go such deceivers all and some:  
of the first valley let so much suffice,  
and of those by its vengeance overcome.'
- 100 Already had we reached the place where lies  
the narrow path across the second dike,  
which buttress for another arch supplies.
- 103 Thence heard we people whimper plaintive-like  
in the next pocket, and with snorting roar  
of muzzle, with their palms upon them strike.
- 106 The banks were with a mould encrusted o'er  
by vapours from below that on them rest,  
with both the eyes and nostrils waging war.
- 109 The bottom is so hollowly depressed  
there is no room to see, except one go  
up where the arching bridge is loftiest.
- 112 Thither we came, whence in the ditch below  
I saw folk weltering in excrement  
that out of human privies seemed to flow.

While I was looking down with eye intent,  
I saw one head so smeared with ordure all,  
if clerk or layman 't was not evident.  
'Wherfore so greedy art thou,' did he bawl,  
'at me more than the filthy rest to stare?'  
'Because,' I answered, 'if I well recall,  
I have already seen thee with dry hair;  
Alessio Interminci of Lucca, late  
wast thou: whence singled out from others there.'  
And thereon he, belabouring his pate:  
'To this has plunged me down the sycophance  
wherewith my tongue was never satiate.'  
Hereon my Leader said to me: 'Advance  
thy face still further forward, till thou bring  
thine eyesight full upon the countenance  
Of that uncleanly and dishevelled thing,  
who scratches yon with nails smeared filthily,  
and now is standing up, now cowering.  
Thus is the harlot Thais seen of thee,  
who answered once her minion when he said:  
"Dost greatly thank me?"—"Nay, stupendously."  
And herewith let our sight be surfeited.'

## NOTES

*Sloping series of ten concentric ditches or pouches which 'en-sack' various classes of the fraudulent.*

ll. 1-18. The Malebolge (Malpouches) are ten great concentric gulches or canyons, each in succession a little lower, and of course smaller in circumference, than the one surrounding it. From the foot of the cliff where Geryon leaves us, we cross these successive bolge upon rough stone bridges, ascending and descending in each case the high-slung curve of the arch. The ancient Ponte della Maddalena (alias Ponte del Diavolo) over the Serchio a few miles above Lucca is an interesting example of such a bridge. Finally, after crossing the tenth and innermost bolgia, we reach the brink of the deep Pit of lowest Hell (Canto xxxi).

ll. 28-33. The fact that, owing to the enormous crowds of pilgrims in the Jubilee year (which is the identical year of this mystic journey), the elementary precaution was taken to make the people file across the Ponte Sant' Angelo in an orderly way seems very remarkable to the Florentine mind. To this day there is no agreement among pedestrians as to right and left. To attempt to pass systematically on either hand at Florence one must be very determined and a little rude. The hill (l. 33) on the left bank of the Tiber was doubtless higher then than now. Or possibly the distant Capitoline Hill is meant.

l. 51. The word *salse*, here translated *pit*, is a local reference to a golgotha at Bologna where the bodies of criminals were thrown. Bologna where Dante was a student, is often referred to with intimate satire.

l. 55. Ghisola (or Ghislabella) was his sister, whom he persuaded to become the mistress of the Este, the powerful lord of Ferrara.

l. 61. *Sipa* was the Bolognese form of the present subjunctive of the verb meaning 'to be'. The modern form is said to be *sepa*. Bologna lies between the two rivers Reno and Savena.

ll. 62-6. The wide significance to the medieval mind of the wolfish lust of Avarice (*Avaritia*) should not be lost sight of. It is a primary root of almost all evil. As to Bologna, the intelligent fourteenth-century commentator, Benvenuto da Imola, himself a professor there, asserts that in pursuit of their personal pleasures, the Bolognese are in the habit of selling their daughters, sisters, and wives.

I. 72. 'Circling walls': the losty surrounding cliff that shuts this vast cavernous funnel.

II. 83-96. Hypsipyle had betrayed her female fellow-conspirators against superfluous males by saving her father the King. Of another vicissitude of her remarkable career we shall hear in *Purgatorio* xxvi. Jason, in his more heroic capacity, is mentioned in the noble invocation at the beginning of *Paradiso* and his ship Argo thrillingly reappears in the last glorious scene of the Poem.

I. 113. It is hardly necessary to remind the sympathetic reader that no poet could well be more delicate and pure-minded than Dante. But it is impossible to pass through Hell without encountering filth and obscenity, as here and at the close of Canto xxi.

I. 122. A nobleman of the great Intermanni (Antelminelli) family of Lucca, who, according to Benvenuto, was an incestuous flatterer even of menials. Of this family came the great Ghibelline leader, Castruccio Castracane, whose gallant exploits were just a few years too late to be recorded, as they served, by the Poet.

I. 135. This anecdote is from Cicero, *De Amicitia*, xxvi, evidently referring to a comedy by Terence with whose plays Dante shows no familiarity. In the comedy not Thaïs but the slave between makes the flattering reply. Dante seems to mistake Thaïs for a real person. The reply, which seemed to Cicero odd to our Poet so extravagant, seems commonplace now. In fact the words of the text, 'anzi meravigliose' are nothing more than our everyday 'thanks awfully!'

## CANTO XIX

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 3. Simoniacal Popes*

- 1 O Simon Magus, O disciples vile!  
    ye who the things of God, which ought to be  
        the brides of righteousness, lo! ye defile
- 4 For silver and for gold rapaciously;  
    now it besits the trumpet sound your doom,  
        because in this third pouch of Hell are ye.
- 7 Now had we climbed above the following tomb  
    upon the rocky causey, to that part  
        which doth the middle-moat quite over-loom.
- 10 Wisdom Supreme! what evidence of art  
    in Heaven, on earth, and in the bad world found!  
        and how great justice doth thy power impart!
- 13 I saw upon the sides and on the ground,  
    with many a hole the dark stone drilled, and all  
        of one dimension, and each one was round.
- 16 None ampler seemed to me, nor yet more sm.  
    than those that in my beautiful St. John  
        are made to the baptizers for a stall;
- 19 And one of these, not many years agone,  
    I broke for one who stifling would have died:  
        be this a seal to undeceive each one.
- 22 Thrust forth from every opening, I descried  
    a sinner's feet, and saw the ankles twain  
        far as the calf: the rest remained inside.
- 25 The soles of all were both consumed a main,  
    and so with flames the joints were quivering  
        no ropes and withies would have stood the strai
- 28 As flame of oily things is wont to cling  
    alone upon the face exterior,  
        so here from heel to point 't was flickering.
- 31 'Master,' said I, 'who is that one who more  
    infuriate writhes than his companions there,  
        and whom a redder flame is licking o'er?'
- 34 And he to me: 'If thou wilt let me bear  
    thee down by yonder bank that lies more low,  
        from him of him and of his crimes shalt hear.'

- 57 'Thy pleasure, lord, is mine, and thou dost know  
that I depart not from thy will,' I said,  
'and knowest my unspoken thought, I trow.'
- 49 Thereon the fourth embankment did we tread,  
turned, and descended leftward from the bank  
down to the narrow, perforated bed.
- 43 The Master good not yet from off his flank  
deposed me, till he brought me to the hole  
of him who so was weeping with his shank.
- 46 'Who c'er thou art, thus planted like a pole  
top downward,' then began I, 'do thou strive  
to speak out, if thou canst, O wretched soul!'
- 49 My posture was the friar's, at hand to shrive  
the false assassin, who, when planted, tries  
to call him back, still to remain alive.
- 52 'Art thou already standing there?' he cries,  
'Art standing there already, Boniface?  
By several seasons, then, the writing lies.'
- 55 And art thou glutted with that wealth apace,  
for sake whereof thou didst not fear betray  
the Lady beautiful, and then disgrace?'
- 58 Such I became as people brought to stay  
because an answer from the mark seems wide,  
as if bemocked, not knowing what to say.
- 61 'Say to him quickly,' hereon Virgil cried,  
' "I am not he thou thinkst, I am not he!" '  
And as enjoined upon me, I replied.
- 64 The spirit writhed his feet exceedingly;  
then sighing, and with voice disconsolate,  
said to me: 'What then wantest thou of me?
- 67 If thou desire so much to know my state,  
that for this cause thou hast the bank traversed,  
know, I was vested with the Mantle Great.
- 70 True son of the She-bear, I had such thirst  
insatiate to advance the Cubs, mine own,  
that wealth above, and here myself, I pursed.
- 73 Beneath my head the others down are thrown,  
preceding me in simony, and all  
flattened along the fissures of the stone.

- 76 Down thither shall I likewise drop withal,  
     when comes that other whom I thought to meet  
     what time I let the sudden question fall.
- 79 But longer now do I already heat  
     my footpalms, standing here inverted thus,  
     than he shall planted stay with ruddy feet:
- 82 For after him a Pastor impious  
     shall come from Westward, fouler in his deed,  
     such as befits to cover both of us.
- 85 New Jason will he be, of whom we read  
     in Maccabees: and pliant as that lord,  
     will he who governs France give this one heed?
- 88 I know not if foolhardy was my word,  
     but I made answer only in this key:  
     'I pray thee tell me now how rich a hoard
- 91 Saint Peter paid into the treasury,  
     ere gave Our Lord the keys to his control?  
     Nothing in truth He asked save 'Follow me!'
- 94 Nor Peter nor the rest did levy toll  
     of gold or silver, nor Matthias grant,  
     for the lost office of the guilty soul.
- 97 Then stay, well punished, and be vigilant  
     in guardianship of the ill-gotten gold  
     that made thee against Charles so arrogant.
- 100 And were I not forbid to be so bold,  
     because of reverence for the Keys Sublime  
     which in the happy life thou diddest hold,
- 103 Yet harsher language would befit my rime:  
     Pastors, your greed afflicts the world; it brings  
     good underfoot, while still exalting crime!
- 106 Of you the Evangelist had prefigurings,  
     when her that sits the waters did he view  
     committing fornication with the kings:
- 109 She with the seven heads begotten, who  
     from the ten horns her sign and sanction bore  
     long as her spouse delight in virtue knew.
- 112 A god of gold and silver ye adore;  
     and from the idolaters how differ ye,  
     save where they one, a hundred ye implore?

- 115 Ah, Constantine, to what iniquity  
gave birth—not thy conversion—that domain  
which the first wealthy Father took from thee!"
- 118 And while I sang to him in such a strain,  
whether that frenzy or that conscience bit,  
with both his footpalms struggled he amain.
- 121 I think my Leader well applauded it,  
he listened still with look of such content  
to the clear accents which the truth besit.
- 124 Thereon to take me up, both arms he bent,  
and when he had me wholly on his breast,  
remounted by the way of his descent;
- 127 Nor did he tire of holding me thus pressed,  
till up the summit of the arch he bare,  
which crosses from the fourth to the fifth crest.
- 130 Here he laid down his charge with tender care,  
tender, for rugged was the crag and steep,  
that goats had found a toilsome passage there:
- 133 Thence was disclosed to me another deep.

## NOTES

*Pope Nicholas III (of the Orsini) thrust head first into a hole in the rock, kicking out his blazing feet, waiting to be plugged in by Boniface VIII.*

I. 1. For Simon Magus see Acts viii. From his name is derived the word *simony*, the perversion of the gift of God into an object of merchandise. The topsy-turvy position of the sinners is a symbol of this perversion.

I. 17. The Baptistry of Florence where until recent times all Florentine children were christened. The marble holes or 'stalls' are no longer there, but similar holes may still be seen in the beautiful Baptistry of Pisa. Of Dante's bold enterprise in breaking one of them we know nothing beyond the record here, which apparently put an end to malicious rumours. At all events the answer lives, the rumours are dead.

II. 49-51. One of the legal punishments of that implacable period was the 'planting' thus of the perfidious murderer. Dante's similitudes imply, of course, familiarity on the part of the reader of his time with the scene referred to. The customs, habits, sports, arts, affairs of all kinds from which he draws images have greatly changed, so that we have to use more imagination in reading him.

II. 52-4. Dante is puzzled at being mistaken for Pope Boniface VIII, the personage in the world of whom he most disapproves. 'The writing' is that of the book of Destiny, which is to some extent known to the damned, although they do not know the present as it passes in the upper world. Canto x, ll. 94-108.

To grasp this grimly comic situation one has to be living in imagination in April of the Jubilee year of Grace, 1300, when Pope Boniface was full of vigour and ambitious expectancy. But as we have the advantage over him of being able to turn

‘the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hour-glass,’

we know that he has before him in this world but three years and six months—space too brief for his vast designs. Now Nicholas, son of the she-bear, being well-read in

‘the Great Book where black on white  
is set down ineffaceably’ (*Par. xv. 50*),

knows that Boniface is to fall headlong into this hole; but, perceiving the figure waiting above him, he fancies he must have

been deceived in the date. Insensitive must be the critic who deems Dante wanting in the sense of humour!

*I.* 57. The references to the Church as the Lady, or the Bride of Christ, and by extension to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, are so frequent that comment is, in most cases, superfluous.

*II.* 67-72. The ex-Pope Nicholas III, who is speaking, was of the Orsini family, whose cognizance was the 'orsa' ('ursa', she-bear). He is not the first simoniacal pope, nor to be the last. Each on the arrival of his successor is jammed down flat into the fissure awaiting him—a narrow room contrasting with the great place he had occupied above.

*II.* 82-7. Referring to Clement V, the Frenchman, tool of Philip the Fair. See 2 Maccabees iv and v. Unless Dante himself was a prophet this must have been written after the death of Clement in 1314.

*I.* 90. Dante does not pay him the compliment of the *You*. Cf. Canto xv, l. 30, note.

*I.* 95. Matthias was elected to the apostleship to take the place of Judas Iscariot (*Acts* i).

*II.* 106-11. Revelation xvii.—The woman is the corrupt Church; the spouse, the Pope, the seven heads and ten horns the sacraments and the commandments.

*II.* 115-17. This donation of Constantine was at a later time proved to be fictitious. Dante lived before historical sources were critically analyzed. Milton's translation of this apostrophe in his tract *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England*, will be remembered.

*II.* 124-33. Virgil carried Dante from the bottom of the canyon up the bank and then up to the pinnacle of the arching bridge, from which he could look into the fourth bolgia.

## CANTO XX

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 4. Diviners. Origin of Mantua*

- 1 New punishment must needs by me be dirged,  
providing matter for the twentieth strain  
of the first Song, which tells of the submerged.
- 4 I was already placed and wholly fain  
to look down into the disclosed abyss  
bedewed with tears of anguish and of pain,
- 7 And through the circling vale I saw at this  
a silent, weeping folk, who onward pressed  
as pace in this our world the litanies.
- 10 As lower down on them my sight did rest,  
each wondrously distorted seemed between  
the chin and the beginning of the chest:
- 13 For every visage had been twisted clean  
round to the loins, and backward they must go,  
since looking forward had forbidden been.
- 16 Thus utterly distorted by some throe  
of palsy, some one may have been perchance;  
I never saw, nor think it can be so.
- 19 Imagine, Reader, so God's sufferance  
permit that, reading, thou be edified,  
how I could keep unwet my countenance,
- 22 When near at hand our image I descried  
contorted so, the weeping eyes did wet  
with tears the hinder parts where they divide.
- 25 Truly I wept, leaned on the parapet  
of the hard bridge, so that mine Escort said:  
'Art thou among the other fools even yet?
- 28 Here piety lives on in pity dead.  
Who is a greater reprobate than one  
that grieves at doom divine? Lift up thy head,
- 31 Lift up thy head, and do thou look upon  
him earth engulfed before the Theban's sight,  
whereat all shouted: "Whither dost thou run,
- 34 Amphiaräus? Why forsake the fight?"  
From plunging downward he was only stayed  
by Minos, who lays hold on every wight.

- 37 Mark how his shoulders to a breast are made!  
Because he wished to see too far before,  
forever backward doth he look and tread.
- 40 Tiresias see, who altered semblance wore  
when from a male he was made seminine,  
while all his members transformation bore;
- 41 And afterward he had to strike again  
with wand the intertwining serpents two,  
ere he regained his plumage masculine.
- 45 With back to this one's belly is Aruns, who  
in mountain land of Luni (on whose height  
drudges the Carrarese who dwells below)
- 49 Had once a cavern among marbles white  
for his abode, from which he could behold  
ocean and stars with unobstructed sight.
- 52 And she whose locks unfileted enfold  
her bosom from thy sight,—the hairy coat  
o'er all her skin on the other side unrolled,—
- 55 Was Manto, who through many countries sought,  
and after tarried where I had my birth:  
whereof to please me take a little note.
- 58 After her father had from life gone forth,  
and Bacchus' city came to slavery,  
this woman for a long time roamed the earth.
- 61 There lies a lake up in fair Italy,  
at bottom of the Alps that fence Almain,  
Tyrol above,—Benaco names that sea.
- 64 I think a thousand founts the Pennine drain  
of water which within that lake is pent,  
Garda and Val Camonica between.
- 67 There is a middle place where he of Trent  
or Brescia pastor, or the Veronese,  
might give his blessing, if that way he went.
- 70 Peschiera, fair and mighty sortalice,  
sits where lies lowest the surrounding shore,  
to front the Brescians and the Bergamese.
- 73 There whatsoever cannot tarry more  
in bosom of Benaco, down must flow  
and make a river through green meadow floor.

- 76 The waters gathering head, as Mincio,  
no longer called Benaco, flow apace  
far as Governo, falling into Po.
- 79 Coursing not far, they find a level place  
where in a wide lagoon they stagnant spread,  
and where in summer oft is noisomeness.
- 82 Passing that way, the Virgin, never wed,  
perceived a tract of land amid the fen,  
wholly untilled and uninhabited;
- 85 And there, to shun all intercourse with men,  
stayed with her servants, arts of magic plied,  
lived, and there left her empty body then.
- 88 The people, who were scattered far and wide,  
thereafter gathered in that place, which lay  
defended by the marsh on every side.
- 91 O'er those dead bones the city builded they,  
and, after her who first had chosen the place,  
called it, without more omen, Mantua.
- 94 Denser therein was once the populace,  
ere ever Casalodi witlessly  
from Pinamonte suffered such disgrace.
- 97 Hence if thou ever hear, I monish thee,  
my city given foundation different,  
let falsehood not defraud the verity.'
- 100 'Master, thy reasons are so evident,  
and so lay hold of my belief,' said I,  
'that others were to me but embers spent.
- 103 But tell me, of the people going by,  
none seest thou worthy of note? for to their woe,  
only to that, returns my inner eye.'
- 106 Whereon he answered: 'He whose beard doth flow  
down from his cheeks upon his shoulders dun,  
was, what time Greece of males was emptied so
- 109 That in the cradles tarried almost none,  
an augur, and with Calchas gave the sign  
to cut, in Aulis, the first cable,—one
- 112 Eurypylus,—thus in a certain line  
my lofty tragedy records the name:  
well knowest it thou who knowest each verse of mine.'

- 115 That other, in the flanks so light of frame,  
    was Michael Scot, and of a truth he knew  
        of magical deceptions well the game.
- 118 Guido Bonatti view; Aedente view,  
    who now would wish his leather and his awl  
        had held him,—all too late repents he too.
- 121 See wretched hags who let the needle fall,  
    the spool and distaff, for divining fain,  
        with herb and image working spells withal.
- 124 But come, for with his thorns already Cain  
    doth hold of both the hemispheres the bound,  
        and yonder under Seville touch the main,
- 127 And only yesternight the moon was round:  
    thou shouldst recall, for she did thee no wrong  
        one certain time within the wood profound.'
- 130 While thus he spake to me, we moved along.

## NOTES

*Soothsayers walking backward with heads wrenched around so that their copious tears fall upon their hinder parts.*

ll. 4-5. Dante is looking down from the crown of the arching bridge to which Virgil had borne him up from the gulch of the Simoniacs.

l. 9. Slowly as pace the chanting clergy or monastics. As in Catholic lands the penitential liturgical service is long heard before the slow procession is seen, it is natural to transfer the word 'litany' to the procession itself; the figure was either popular or instantly comprehensible.

l. 28. Dante who had been commended by Virgil (human Reason) for his indignation against Filippo Argenti, is now rebuked for his sympathy with these distorted sufferers.

l. 34. The soothsayer Amphiaraüs, in the course of the expedition of the Seven against Thebes, was swallowed up by the earth. Dante gets the tale from the poet Statius, whom we shall meet in Purgatory.

l. 40. This singular story of the metamorphosis of the Theban soothsayer is from Ovid, *Met.* III.

l. 46. Aruns, Etruscan soothsayer who, according to Lucan (*Pharsalia*), prophesied the Civil Wars of Rome.

l. 47. The Poet's visit to the beautiful Lunigiana (named from the ancient Etruscan and Roman Luni) at the foot of the marble snow of the Carrara Mountains, is commemorated in the lovely eighth Canto of *Purgatorio*.

l. 55. Manto was daughter of Tiresias.

l. 61. This long digression, geographically so vivid and accurate as to the origin and situation of Mantua, is one of the few passages not vitally—at least not obviously—connected with the scheme of the whole. No other long poem has so few such excrescences, whose 'moral is in being fair'. A different account of the origin of Mantua is given in the *Aeneid*, Book X. Here, for some reason not now understood, our Poet makes Virgil correct himself.

l. 67. The pastor (bishop) gives the benediction only within his diocese. The place where the three dioceses met was in or near the lake. For the other geographical references, see detailed map of the region of Garda Lake.

l. 70. Five centuries later Peschiera became one of the four fortresses of the famous (or rather infamous!) Quadrilatera military centre of Austrian rule in northern Italy.

II 79-93. Browning, in the first Book of *Sordello*, faithfully pictures the region:

'In Mantua territory half is slough,  
Half pine-tree forest, maples, scarlet oaks  
Breed o'er the river-beds, even Mincio chokes  
With sand the summer through, but 't is morass  
In winter up to Mantua walls.'

I. 95. Referring to a bloody *coup d'état* in the course of which Pinamonte first duped and then expelled the lord of Mantua, Count Casalodi.

I. 112. *Aeneid*, Book II, l. 114.

I. 113. Dante refers to his Poem as Comedy (Canto xvi, l. 128). In his Letter to Can Grande, he distinguishes between Comedy and Tragedy, saying, in substance, that Comedy begins by treating of matters unpleasant and ends happily, while Tragedy does the reverse. There is also a vast difference of style and diction. Thus, ignorant of ancient classic drama, he adopts a new definition of the terms, applying them to narrative poems. As to diction, it is quite true that Dante studiously employs the simple speech of everyday life. But he is not bound by any theory of diction: in the later and nobler parts of the Poem he can rise to the height of his great argument in language as stately as the theme demands.

II. 116-23. Michael Scot (or the Scot), a scholar greatly trusted by the Emperor Frederick II. Scholars, especially astronomical and medical students, were apt to be suspected of sorcery. Guido was an astrologer at the court of Frederick II. Asdente was a cobbler who dabbled in divination. As to the witches, the melting of the image of the person to be put to death is perhaps the commonest tale in folk lore and no uncommon theme in literature, ancient and modern.

II. 124-30. The Man in the Moon was popularly Cain carrying a bundle of thorns, the sorry 'fruit of the ground' that he harvested. The sky is of course invisible in Hell, but Dante will not forgo his astronomical allusion. The moon is one day past the full and sinks into the sea south of Seville (taking Jerusalem as the point of observation). That is, it is about 6 a.m. The final words of the speaker may mean this: Dante should remember that, while in distress of mind in the deep wood, the moon exempted him from her malign influence which might have made him insane. Cf. the origin of the word *lunacy*.

## CANTO XXI

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 5. Barrators*

- 1 Discoursing thus of matters different  
     whereto my Comedy cares not to hark,  
     holding the height, from bridge to bridge we went,
- 4 But halted other vain laments to mark  
     in Evil-pouches, other cloven den;  
     and there I saw that it was weirdly dark.
- 7 As in the Arsenal of Venice, men  
     boil sticky pitch in winter, which they use  
     to make their vessels water-tight again
- 10 When unseaworthy; some perhaps may choose  
     to build anew,—some make it their concern  
     to caulk ribs buffeted in many a cruise;
- 13 Some hammer at the prow, some at the stern,  
     some fashion oars and others cordage twine,  
     and some to mend the jib or mainsail turn:
- 16 Thus not by fire, but by an art divine,  
     boiled clammy pitch down there, which every side  
     smeared over the embankments that confine.
- 19 I saw it, but naught else therein descried,  
     except the bubbles which the boiling raised,  
     as all heave up and then comprest subside.
- 22 While thither downward steadfastly I gazed,  
     my Leader saying, ‘Beware, beware!’ did swerve  
     me round to him from where I stood amazed.
- 25 Then like one fascinated to observe  
     the very thing that one perforce should flee,  
     till sudden terror takes away his nerve
- 28 So that he puts not off his flight to see,  
     I looked behind and saw a devil swart  
     come running up the causey after me.
- 31 Fierce-visaged was he, and oh! how my heart  
     sank at his action so unpitying,—  
     so light of foot with wings spread wide apart!
- 34 Astride his shoulder high and tapering  
     a sinner sitting on both haunches rode:  
     to the ankle-tendon did the demon cling.

- 37 'Maltalons,' he cried, as on our bridge he strode,  
    'look ye, one Elder of Saint Zita,—dash  
        him under, while I get another load'
- 40 From the town I stock with plenty of the trash:  
    barrators all there but Bonturo,—in brief  
        there they convert the No to Aye for cash.'
- 43 Flinging him down, upon the flinty cliff  
    he wheeled, and never gave so hot a chase  
        an unleashed mastiff running down a thief.
- 46 That sinner plunged, and aired his back apace;  
    but demons, lurking there the bridge below,  
        cried: 'No invoking here the Holy Face!'
- 49 Here swim ye not as in the Serchio:  
    therefore take heed, unless thou mean to try  
        our grapples, not above the pitch to show.'
- 52 Then, pricking him with hundred prongs, did cry:  
    'Here must thou dance about in covert guise.  
        that, if thou can, thou swindle on the sly!'
- 55 Cooks make their scullions do not otherwise,  
    when with their hooks they plunge the carcass clean  
        down in the caldron, that it may not rise.
- 58 Then said the Master good: 'Lest it be seen  
    that thou art with me, do thou downward cower  
        behind a block, that thou mayst have some screen;
- 61 And what though wrong may seem to overpower,  
    be not afraid, for I these matters know,  
        having been in such wrangle once before.'
- 64 Beyond the bridge's head then did he go,  
    and when he reached the sixth embankment, he  
        had need enough a steadfast front to show.
- 67 With such a tempest and as furiously  
    as when dogs rush upon a beggar man,  
        who, where he halts, cuts very short his plea,
- 70 From underneath the bridge those demons ran,  
    and turned against him every hook and rake;  
        but, 'None of you be felons!' he began:
- 73 'Ere with your forks ye loose upon me break,  
    to listen to me send ye forward one:  
        then as to tearing me your counsel take.'

- 76 All shouted out: 'Be Malacoda gone!'  
 and halted: whereupon one forward goes,  
 saying, 'What can it skill?' as he came on.
- 79 'And dost thou, Malacoda, then suppose,  
 thou wouldest have found me,' said that Lord of mine,  
 'sase hitherto, however ye oppose,
- 82 Without propitious fate and Will Divine?  
 Let me pass on, for Heaven has sent behest  
 that I show some one else this road malign.'
- 85 Thereat so fallen was his haughty crest,  
 that, letting fall the grapple at his feet,  
 'No striking now!' he shouted to the rest.
- 88 'O thou!' exclaimed my Leader, 'from thy seat  
 where crouching on the craggy bridge dost hide,  
 now unto me securely make retreat.'
- 91 Wherfore I moved, and promptly sought his side;  
 but all the devils sprang toward me so  
 I trembled lest the compact were defied.
- 94 Even thus I saw the soldiers long ago,  
 by compact from Caprona issuing,  
 exhibit fear amid so many a foe.
- 97 With all my body I drew up to cling  
 unto my Leader close, nor turned mine eye  
 from off their look, which was not promising.
- 100 Forks levefess'd, they kept saying: 'Shall I try  
 and touch him up upon the hinder side?'  
 'Yes, nick it into him,' was the reply.
- 103 But that one who was talking with my Guide,  
 turned about quickly and commanded thus:  
 'Bide quiet, Scarmiglione, quiet bide!'
- 106 Then: 'There's no thoroughfare,' he said to us,  
 'across this bridge, because the sixth arch lies  
 now on the bottom, wholly ruinous:
- 109 If going forward still to you seem wise,  
 along the present bank ye journey may;  
 hard by there doth another bridgeway rise.
- 112 Later by five than this hour yesterday,  
 twelve hundred six and sixty years their line  
 completed since here broken was the way.

- 115 Thither I'm sending some of these of mine  
to see who airs him in the pitchy den:  
go with them, for they will not be malign.
- 118 Alichino and Calcabrina, forward then,  
and thou Cagnazzo,' he began to add;  
'and Barbariccia, do thou lead the ten.
- 121 Libicocco and Draghignazzo come,' he bade,  
'tusked Ciriatto and Grassiacanē too,  
and Farsarello and Rubicante mad.
- 124 Explore all round about the boiling glue;  
let these be safe to the next bridging way  
spanning the dens, a craggy avenue.'
- 127 'Alas, my Lord, what see I?'—did I say:  
'Go we alone and without escort now;  
if thou art able, none for me, I pray!
- 130 If with thy wonted heed observest thou,  
dost thou the gnashing of their tusks not hear,  
and see them threaten mischief with their brow?
- 133 And he to me: 'I would not have thee fear;  
let them gnash with their tushes at their will,  
they do it for the parboiled wretches there.'
- 136 Upon the left-hand margin turned they still;  
but each began by thrusting tongue to lump  
the cheek, as signal to their leader ill,
- 139 Whereat he made a trumpet of his rump.

## NOTES

Venal politicians, and others who had secretly defiled their hands with funds entrusted, plunged neck and crop into boiling pitch.  
 Barrators are not essentially different from political bosses and other parasites of the public treasury such as to-day thrive at the expense of the helpless taxpayer, who is no longer able to solace himself with vivid belief in the retribution here described. Dante evidently wrote these two Cantos (xxi-xxii) with great glee.

ll. 38-54. Dante here gives some pregnant hints about Lucca, as he elsewhere does of Siena and many other famous cities intimately known to him. Santa Zita is patroness of Lucca, a maid-servant whom her master could not seduce—‘the Pamela of legend’—whence the expression ‘Elder of Saint Zita’ suggests the tale of Susannah. The Holy Face is an ancient image of Christ still venerated in the cathedral there; the Serchio flows near the city wall. Bonturo is excepted as who should say—all grafters except Boss Tweed.

l. 63. See Canto ix where Virgil tells of his previous descent to the lowest Hell.

ll. 91 ff. It has been suggested that Dante here refers to the trumped-up charge of barbary which was one of the pretexts for his banishment from Florence in 1302. Cf. note below on the names of the fiends.

l. 95. Caprona, a Pisan fortress on the Arno, was surrendered in 1289 to a force with which Dante served. This was shortly after the campaign so splendidly commemorated in *Purgatorio* v. The ruin of Caprona can still be seen from the train shortly before reaching Pisa from Florence.

l. 112. The arch was shattered when Christ after the Crucifixion descended into Hell. It is now, therefore, mid-forenoon of the Saturday after Good Friday, 1300.

l. 118. These are humorous travesties of names of Florentine families which Dante regarded as fair game. To this day Florence is noted for family names which seem humorous or ironical.

l. 139. Devils were conceived to be not only malignant but foul and obscene. See the note to the introductory lines of the next Canto, and that on the place of the flatterers, Canto xviii.

## CANTO XXII

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 5. Comedy of the Devils*

- I have seen horsemen into battle go,  
 and when on dress parade, and striking tent,  
 and scurrying to anticipate the foe,
- And foragers who on you made descent,  
 O Arctines, and many a mounted scout,  
 running of tilt and clash of tournament,
- With boom of bell and blare of trumpet shout,  
 with castle beacons and with drums of war,  
 and instruments from home and from without:
- But never yet to bugle so bizarre  
 did I see horse or foot set forward thus,  
 nor ship by any sign of land or star.
- On went we, the ten demons guiding us:  
 Ah, the fell company! but in the fane  
 with saints, in tavern with the gluttonous.
- Intent upon the pitch did I remain,  
 to see the whole condition of the moat  
 and of the people in their burning pain.
- Like dolphins when to sailors they denote,  
 with arching body bounding into sight,  
 that they look sharp to keep their ship afloat:
- So ever and again, for easement slight,  
 some sinner would present his back outside  
 and hide it fleeter than a flash of light.
- And as at marge of flooded moat abide  
 the squatting frogs and only show the snout  
 so that their feet and other bulk they hide,
- The sinners thus were lying all about;  
 but at the approach of Barbariccia  
 they dived, and only bubbles showed without.
- I saw (whereat I shudder to this day)  
 one lingering thus—as when one takes the water  
 another frog will often chance to stay;
- And Graffiacanè, watchful counterplotter,  
 hooked him by pitchy tresses and updrew,  
 so that he had the semblance of an otter.

- 37 (The names of all and sundry of that crew,  
so had I noted them when they were picked  
and listened when they called,—by this I knew.)
- 40 'O Rubicantè, see that thou inflict  
thy talons on his back and soundly slay!'  
shouted together all the maledict.
- 43 And I: 'Endeavour, Master, if thou may,  
to learn what luckless spirit thus doth lie  
to clutches of his enemies a prey.'
- 46 My Leader up beside him drawing nigh,  
demanded whence he came, and this his word:  
'Born in the Kingdom of Navarre was I.'
- 49 My mother placed me servant to a lord,  
for she had borne me to a worthless blade,  
destroyer of himself and of his hoard.
- 52 Of good King Tybalt then retainer made,  
in barratry attained I mastership,  
wherfore down here hot reckoning is paid.'
- 55 And Ciriatto, each way from whose lip  
a tusk, as of a boar, protruded long,  
gave him to feel how one of them could rip.
- 58 The mouse was fallen evil cats among,  
but Barbariccia locked him in embrace,  
saying: 'Stand off from him, while I emprong!'
- 61 Then to my Master turning round the face,  
added: 'Ask on, if thou wouldest have him show  
yet more, before the other fiends deface.'
- 64 'Now of the other sinners, dost thou know',  
my Leader said, 'any Italian here  
beneath the pitch?' And he: 'Short while ago  
67 I quitted one who was their neighbour near;  
would I were still with him in cover laid,  
so neither claw nor grapple should I fear.'
- 70 'We bear too much!' then Libicocco said,  
as with the hook he caught his arm amain,  
and, rending, bore away a sinew-shred.
- 73 And Draghignazzo for a grip was fain  
down at the legs; whence their Decurion  
with grim demeanour turned and turned again.

- 76 When they were somewhat pacified anon,  
my Guide inquired of him, without delay,  
who ruefully his wound was gazing on:
- 79 Who was that soul from whom, as thou dost say,  
ill parting madest thou to come abroad?'  
  'Twas Friar Gomita.' answered he straightway,
- 82 'He of Gallura, adept in every fraud,  
who had in hand his master's every soc,  
and dealt so with them that they all applaud:
- 85 Taking the cash, he suavely let them go,  
so says he; by no petty standard clever  
in office jobbery, but hugely so.
- 88 Don Michael Zanchè of Logodoro ever  
keeps him boon company; Sardinia draws  
them on to wag their tongues that weary never.
- 91 But look! I fear that other fiend because  
his teeth are gnashing; I would add a word,  
but for my scurf he seems to whet his claws.'
- 94 To Farfarello turning then, who stirred  
his eyes asquint as if for striking home,  
their master marshal said: 'Off, wicked bird!'
- 97 'If ye would see or hearken all and some,'  
the frightened spirit re-began thereon,  
'Tuscans or Lombards, I will make them come.
- 100 But the Maltalons must be well withdrawn  
lest my companions their vendetta fear,  
and I, not stirring from this spot, for one
- 103 That I am, will make seven more appear  
by whistling, which, when one of us gets out,  
is customary signal with us here.'
- 106 Cagnazzo at these words perked up his snout,  
wagging his head, exclaiming: 'Hear the thing  
the knave to fling him down has thought about!'
- 109 Whence, fertile in device, he answering  
said: 'Over-knavish am I, it is true,  
when I procure my friends more suffering.'
- 112 Alichino could not hold, but counter to  
the others, said to him: 'If thou depart,  
I shall in no wise galloping pursue,

- 115 But shall above the pitch on pinions dart:  
     leave we the ridge, a shelter be the shore,  
     and see what match for us alone thou art!
- 118 Reader, new sport is presently in store!  
     bended their eyes the other way all these,—  
     he foremost who had been most loath before.
- 121 Selected well his time the Navarrese,  
     planted his foot-soles firm, and in a flash  
     leaped, and released him from their purposes.
- 124 Whereat they all with self-reproaches gnash,  
     he most who made them so discomfited;  
     and he leaped forward, yelling: 'Not so rash!'
- 127 But little it availed: fear faster fled  
     than wing could follow; down he dived amain,  
     and on, with upturned breast, the demon sped.
- 130 Not other fashion is the wild duck fain  
     to dive down nimbly, when draws nigh the hawk,  
     who, vexed and baffled, glides aloft again.
- 133 But Calcabrina, furious at the mock,  
     followed behind him flying, in delight  
     at this escape, the scuffle not to balk;
- 136 And when the barrator had vanished quite,  
     his claws upon his fellow turned,—whence yond  
     above the moat they grappled for the fight.
- 139 But the other was a sparrow-hawk full fond  
     to claw him well, and both together went  
     plump to the middle of the boiling pond.
- 142 The heat caused sudden disentanglement;  
     but all the same they had no power to soar,  
     so wholly did the pitch their wings cement.
- 145 Barbariccia, woeful with the rest, made four  
     incontinently on their pinions glide,  
     with hooks and all, far as the other shore;
- 148 Down to their posts they dart on either side  
     and stretch their foiks toward the limèd pair  
     who were already cooked within the hide:
- 151 And thus we left them in embroilment there.

## NOTES

*Continuation of the preceding scene.*

ll. 1-12. This mock-heroic treatment of an obscene theme was relished by robust medieval taste and is of a piece with the gargoyle and other grotesque plays of fancy which the cathedral builders delighted in. This and the preceding Canto afford example of spirited comic relief of rather high flavour.

ll. 19-21. References to the belief that the leaping of dolphins or porpoises is a sign of coming storm are common in literature. The superstition is said to persist among sailors and fishersfolk. Cf. the talk of the fishermen in the play of *Pericles*, II. i.

I. 52. Thibaut II, King of Navarre in the time of the royal Saint Louis IX, of whom he was son-in-law and companion in arms. The contemporary poet, Rutebeuf, praises him. Of the Navarrese barrator we know no more than is told here. Old commentators say his name was Ciampolo (Jean Paul). With this satirical tale of an 'unjust steward' may be contrasted the touching account of the just Romeo (Romieu) in *Paradiso* vi, closing lines.

I. 81. Gallura and Logodoro are two of the four provinces into which the Pisans divided Sardinia. Michael Zanché was victim of an atrocious crime recorded at the close of Canto xxxiii. We meet a just and gentle magistrate of Gallura in *Purg.* viii. Now this 'noble judge Nino' had as trusty deputy-governor the crafty Friar Gomita; but convicting him of gross corruption in office the noble judge hanged him. Such was the short way with grafters in that simple age!

I. 125. Alichino, whose incautious suggestion had enabled the Navarrese to escape.

ll. 141-51. Thus the prosecutors are themselves entangled: so difficult is it to convict those guilty of malversation in office. If for 'pitch' we read 'oil', the parable takes on for the American reader a singularly modern application.

## CANTO XXIII

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 6. Hypocrites under Copes of Lead*

- 1 Silent, alone, and uncompanioned, so  
went we, the one before and one behind,  
as on their way the Minor Friars go.
- 4 Upon the tale of Æsop now my mind  
was fixed, by reason of the present fray,  
where of the frog and mouse we fabled find:
- 7 For not more similar are Aye and Yea  
than this to that, if with attention due  
the outset and the end we rightly weigh.
- 10 And even as thoughts on other thoughts ensue,  
now out of that was born another: thus  
my former terror double in me grew.
- 13 For I was thinking: 'These because of us  
are flouted, damaged, and at naught are set,  
so that, methinks, they must be furious.'
- 16 If rancour should their evil purpose whet,  
they will come after us, more pitiless  
than dog when snapping up the leveret.'
- 19 Already did I feel my every tress  
stiffen with terror, while I backward peer  
intently, saying: 'Master mine, unless
- 22 Thou quickly hide thyself and me, I fear  
Maltalons, for they hard upon us tread:  
I so imagine them, I feel them near.'
- 25 'If I were fashioned out of glass and lead,  
I could not catch thine outward lineament  
more quickly than thine inward now,' he said.
- 28 'Even now thy thoughts among my own were blent,  
with similar action and with similar face,  
so that of both I made one sole intent.
- 31 If but the dexter bank so slope to base  
that we may down to the next pockt go,  
we shall escape from the imagined chase.'
- 34 He had not yet made end of saying so,  
when I beheld them come with wings spread wide,  
not far away, with will to work us woe.

- 37 Then caught me up full suddenly my Guide  
(even as a mother wakened by a shout  
to see the flames enkindled close beside,
- 40 Who snatching up her little son runs out,  
and, having less for self than him regard,  
tarries not even to wrap a smock about),
- 43 And from the ridge of the embankment hard  
glided face upward down the rocky shore  
which on that side the adjacent valley barred.
- 46 So swift through sluice slipped water nevermore  
the wheel of any bankside mill to run,  
even when nearest to the floats, as bore
- 49 My Master me, that border land upon,  
lying securely clasped upon his breast,  
not merely as companion but as son.
- 52 No sooner had his feet the bottom prest  
than our pursuers were upon the hill  
above us; but his fears were now at rest,
- 55 Because exalted Providence, whose will  
put them in the fifth moat to servitude,  
made leaving it to all impossible.
- 58 A painted folk we found here, who pursued  
their circling round with steps exceeding slow,  
weeping, and looking weary and subdued.
- 61 They had on mantles with the hoods drawn low  
before their eyes, and fashioned by such law  
that in Cologne monastics wear them so.
- 64 Gilded without, they dazzled them who saw;  
but were within of lead, so loaded down  
that those of Frederick were light as straw.
- 67 O everlasting mantle, heavy gown!  
we went along in their companionship  
leftward once more, hearing their dreary moan:
- 70 But with the weight forspent, that fellowship  
so slowly came, that overtook we new  
pilgrims at every movement of the hip.
- 73 Wherefore unto my Leader I: 'Now do  
find some one not unknown by name or deed,  
and thus advancing, let thine eyes rove too.'

- 76 And one who gave the Tuscan accent heed,  
     cried to us from behind: 'O ye who race  
         thus through the dusky air, now stay your speed!'
- 79 Perchance thou'l get from me the wished-for grace.'  
     Wherat my Leader turned and said: 'Now stay,  
         and then proceed according to his pace.'
- 82 I stopped, and by their look saw two betray  
     great eagerness of spirit to advance;  
         but the load hindered, and the crowded way.
- 85 Having come up, awhile with eye askance  
     they gaze upon me, but their words control;  
         then say between themselves, exchanging glance:
- 88 'He seems alive by action of his jole:  
     and by what privilege, if they are dead,  
         go they divested of the heavy stole?'
- 91 To me then: 'Tuscan, to the college led  
     of the sad hypocrites, do not thou scorn  
         to tell us of thy origin,' they said.
- 94 And I replied: 'In the great city born,  
     did I by the river of fair Arno grow,  
         and have the body I have always worn.
- 97 But who are ye from whom distils such woe  
     as I see trickling down along the cheek?  
         and what the pain that glitters on you so?'
- 100 And one replied to me: 'Of lead so thick  
     the orange hoods are, that without surcease  
         the weights thus cause their balances to creak.'
- 103 Jovial Friars were we, and Bolognese,  
     I Catalan, he Loderingo named,  
         and by thy town together for its peace
- 106 Taken, where but a single man is claimed  
     by custom; and it still may be descried  
         around Gardingo how we should be blamed.'
- 109 'O Friars, your iniquities . . .' I cried,  
     but went no further, for there struck my sight  
         one on the ground with three stakes crucified.
- 112 Beholding me, he writhed with all his might,  
     blowing into his beard with many a sigh:  
         but Friar Catalan, who saw his plight,

- 115 Said to me: 'That staked felon thou dost eye,  
counselled the Pharisees that it was meet  
that one man for the populace should die.
- 116 He is laid naked and across the street,  
as thou beholdest, and has first to note  
of all who pass, how heavy weigh their feet.
- 117 His father-in-law is staked within this moat,  
and so the others of that Parliament  
which for the Jews was 'seed of evil fruit.'
- 118 Virgil thereafter I beheld intent  
with wonder on that spirit crucified  
so vilely in eternal banishment.
- 119 Then to the Friar: 'Be it not denied,  
so please you, if it be legitimate,  
to tell if lie upon the right-hand side
- 120 Some passage, that we may go out that gate  
without constraining any angel swart  
to come, and from this bottom extricate.'
- 121 'Still nearer than thy hope,' said he, 'doth start  
a bridgeway from the belt of the abyss,  
spanning the cruel valleys overthwart,
- 122 All save that, broken, it bespans not this:  
ye can ascend the ruin from hereunder  
for up it slopes against the precipice.'
- 123 My Leader bent his brow awhile to ponder,  
and then said: 'Evilly did he advise  
who grapples with his hook the sinners yonder.'
- 124 And the Friar: 'Once I heard them stigmatize  
the Devil at Bologna, and perpended  
that he's a liar and first father of lies.'
- 125 Hercon with larger stride my Leader wended,  
some ire perturbing his expression sweet;  
whence from those leaden souls my pace I mended,
- 126 Following the prints of the beloved sect.

## NOTES

*Just able to move beneath the gilded burden of deceit upon deceit—a lifelong accumulation.*

*l. 3.* Minor Friars, i.e. Franciscans, who were advised by the Saint to walk in this way, although they do not now always observe the rule. In this Canto ecclesiastical imagery is noticeable (Minor Friars, monks in Cologne, college of hypocrites), while Caiaphas and Annas are substituted for the usual examples from Greek or Roman antiquity.

*ll. 4-9.* A frog, while towing a rat across a stream, dives; but seeing the commotion a kite swoops upon both. The 'outset' is the attack upon Alichino by Calcabrina; the 'end' is that both alike suffer.

*ll. 37-51.* This is one of the instances in which our tersely graphic Poet chooses to describe an incident with much illustrative detail. Raphael took the rescue of the child by the mother as the subject for a painting. The reference to absence of the smock is explained by the fact, fully borne out by many allusions in our older literature, that the wearing of a shirt in bed was of old not customary.

*l. 57.* That is for other regions of Hell. We have seen one of them engaged in passenger traffic with Lucca.

*l. 58.* The Hypocrites.

*l. 63.* There is here much to be said in favour of the reading 'Clugn' (Clugny or Cluny) instead of 'Cologna' (Colonia, Cologne). In the Oxford text the line is metrically very irregular. Moreover the historical role of the celebrated Benedictine Abbey of Clugny in Burgundy furnishes a strong *a priori* argument for this reading, which seems to be that of the Trivulzian codex of 1337, and is adopted by the most eminent recent Italian editors (*Testo Critico*, and Professor Casella). Nothing seems to be known about the shape of the cowls at either place, the explanations of the early commentators looking as if they had been invented after the fact, as was too often the case.

*l. 66.* Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Norwich, had a cope of lead put over his head and shoulders, in which he was starved to death for whispering the news of the excommunication of King John. Evidently that heavy penalty was not invented by Frederick II. The symbolism is a solemn one: the mask of

hypocrisy gradually gathers weight until it becomes a clog upon every gesture that might betray the wearer.

Inasmuch as no record is found of the use of the punishment of the leaden cope by Frederick II, it is not improbable that this—as well as other cruelties practised by the severe Emperor Henry VI—has been ascribed to Henry's far humbler son by chroniclers with a bias to prove.

*ll. 70-8.* Dante and Virgil were walking as usual, but their pace was swift to that of the hypocrites. That all speed is relative was understood before the day of the automobile, the airplane, and the Einstein theory.

*ll. 103-8.* During the year when these two were partners in the mayoralty of Florence the palaces of the great Ghibelline family of the Uberti were razed. The Gardingo was anciently a Longobard fortress, standing about where now is the Palazzo Vecchio and its Square. All this was done under the pretence of pacification in the critical period after the important battle of Benevento (1266). These 'jolly friars' were really tools of Pope Clement IV. Cf. the story of Manfred, *Purg.* iii.

*ll. 115-21.* Caiaphas and Annas. Virgil, here representing Rome, would not understand. (Cf. lines 124-6.)

*l. 123.* 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children,' said Christ as he went to be crucified.

*ll. 139-41.* Malacoda had said there was a bridgeway across this gully (xxi. 111).

*l. 142.* Friar Catalano was born of Guelf family at Bologna and no doubt educated at the university there. He is making game of Virgil.

*l. 144.* Directly quoted from the vulgate gospel of John, viii. 44: 'quia mendax est et pater ejus.'

*l. 146.* The references to the perplexity and indignation of the high-souled pagan are telling.

## CANTO XXIV

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 7. The Robbers and the Serpents*

- 1 In that young year-time when the sun his hair  
tempers beneath Aquarius, and when  
the nights already tow'rd the southland fare,—
- 4 The hoarfrost on the greensward copies then  
his sister's image white, but by and by  
abates the dainty temper of his pen,—
- 7 The husbandman, who sees starvation nigh,  
rising and looking out, beholds the plain  
all whitened over, whence he smites his thigh:
- 10 Returning in, doth to and fro complain  
like one who cannot mend his wretched case;  
then out he comes and picks up hope again,
- 13 Beholding how the world has altered face  
in little while, and catching up his crook  
drives forth his sheep to pasturage apace:
- 16 Thus when I saw perturbed my Master's look  
did I lose heart, and thus the balm applied  
suddenly from the wound the ailment took.
- 19 For when we reached the ruined bridge, my Guide  
turned round and fixed me with that kindly glance  
which first I saw beneath the mountain side.
- 22 He spread his arms out, and, as laying plans  
within himself, first viewed the ruined fell,  
then laid his hold upon me to advance.
- 25 Like one who labours and considers well,  
seeming forever to provide anew,  
my Leader, lifting me toward the swell
- 28 Of one crag, had another rock in view,  
saying: 'Now clamber over that one, but  
try first if it be firm to grapple to.'
- 31 No way was this for one in mantle shut,—  
for scarcely we, he light and I pushed on,  
were able to ascend from jut to jut.
- 34 And were it not that in that quarter, one  
ascent is shorter than the other, I know  
nothing of him, but I had been fordone.

- 37 But since upon a slant Malpouches go  
    all to the entrance of the lowest Pit,  
    so must the site of every valley show  
40 One bank upreared above the opposite:  
    we climb, however, the last craggy stair  
    at length, which from the ruined cliff is split.  
43 My lungs so utterly were milked of air  
    when I was up, no farther could I get;  
    nay, sat me down on first arriving there.  
46 'Thus now behoves that sloth aside be set,'  
    the Master said, 'to fame we never come  
    sitting on down nor under coverlet,  
49 Which wanting, whoso goes to his long home  
    leaves of himself on earth as little trace  
    as smoke in air or in the water foam.  
52 Up then, thy panting overcome apace,  
    with spirit that will every battle dare  
    unless the heavy body deep abase.  
55 Behoves thee yet to climb a longer stair:  
    suffices not that forth from these we went;  
    if thou hast understood, now forward fare.'  
58 Then up I rose, and showed my breath less spent  
    than 'twas indeed, and said: 'Go on once more,—  
    look, if I be not strong and confident.'  
61 Upward we took our course, the bridgeway o'er,  
    a craggy, difficult, and narrow way,  
    and far, far steeper than the one before.  
64 Speaking I went, no faintness to betray,  
    when out of the next moat a voice I heard  
    ill suited aught articulate to say.  
67 Of what it said I do not know a word,  
    though now atop the arch that crosses nigh;  
    but he who spake appeared to anger stirred.  
70 I had bent downward, but no living eye  
    could through the darkness to the deep attain:  
    'Master, contrive to come,' said therefore I,  
73 'To the next dike, the inner wall to gain;  
    for even as hence I hear, but cannot heed,  
    so peering down I shape out nothing plain.'

- 76 To this he said: 'No answer is of need  
     except the doing, for the fit request  
     should tacitly be followed by the deed.'
- 79 The bridge we now descended from the crest  
     where with the eighth bank it united stood,  
     and then to me the pouch was manifest:
- 82 And there I saw so terrible a brood  
     of serpents, of diversity so great,  
     that the remembrance still freezes my blood.
- 85 Let Libya with her sand no longer prate:  
     though Amphisbæna, Cenchres, Pharææ,  
     Chelydri, Jaculi, she generate,
- 88 Never so many plagues and dire showed she,  
     even with all regions of the Ethiopic,  
     nor yet with those which border the Red Sea.
- 91 Amid these, cruelly that swarm and grope,  
     were running naked and affrighted folk  
     hopeless of hiding-place or heliotrope.
- 94 Serpents the hands of these behind them yoke,  
     with head and tail transfix them through the loin,  
     and into knotted coils before them lock.
- 97 And lo! at one who loitered near our coign  
     of vantage, sprang a snake and pierced him through  
     just where the collar and the shoulders join.
- 100 Never was I so quickly written, or Ω  
     as he took fire and burnt, and he was doomed  
     all into ashes dropping down to go;
- 103 And then the dust, so on the ground consumed,  
     collected of itself together there,  
     and instantly that former shape resumed.
- 106 So verily the sages great declare  
     the Phœnix dies, and then doth life repeat  
     on drawing nigh to her five-hundredth year;
- 109 Lifelong no grain nor grasses doth she eat,  
     but tears of incense and amome alone,  
     and nard and myrrh are her last winding-sheet.
- 112 As one who falls, he knows not how, and prone  
     upon the ground by force of demon lies,  
     or by some other stoppage binding one,

115 Who, when he rises, looks around, with eyes  
wholly bewildered by the mighty throes  
which he has undergone, and looking sighs:

116 Such was that sinner after he arose.

O Power of God, how just art thou to men,  
that showerest for vengeance down such blows!

121 'Who mayst thou be?' my Leader asked him then;  
whence he replied: 'I rained from Tuscany  
short while ago into this cruel glen.'

124 Life of the brute, not man, delighted me,  
Mule Vanni Fucci, bestially propense:  
Pistoia was my den, and fittingly.'

127 I to my Leader: 'Let him not slip hence,  
and ask what crime here thrust him down so low:  
I knew him man of blood and insolence.'

130 The sinner feigned not, hearing me speak so,  
but full upon me bent his face and thought,  
and coloured with shame's melancholy glow;

133 Then said: 'It grieves me more that I am caught  
in misery which I must now display,  
than when I from the other life was brought.

136 To thy demand I cannot say thee nay:  
I am put down so deep as this because  
I robbed the Chapel of the Fair Array,—

139 And falsely to another imputed 'twas.  
But that thy joy in such a sight abate  
if ever thou escape these gloomy jaws,

142 Open thine ears and listen to thy fate:  
Pistoia shall be thinned of Blacks at first,  
then Florence men and manners renovate.

145 Mars out of Magra's vale with thunderburst  
arises, in black clouds embosomed round,  
and with a storm impetuous and cursed,

148 A battle shall be fought on Picene ground;  
whence sudden shall the mist be riven, so  
that every White thereby receives a wound.

151 And this I have foretold thee to thy woe.'

## NOTES

*Thieves, who in life disguised themselves and crept covertly on their errands, are punished by an eternal series of transmutations from snake to man and man to snake.*

*ll. 1-15.* In February, when the grass is already lush and when snow is a calamity to the shepherd. The Poet's magic gives us a moment's respite from horror, transporting us to a bright morning scene on an upland of southern Italy. The peasant's demonstrative behaviour is thoroughly Italian. In the half-light of early dawn the heavy hoarfrost is mistaken for snow, but with the rising sun the dainty artistry of the frost-work fades out. Frost (*la brina*) and snow (*la neve*) are feminine and therefore sisters. Jack Frost is altogether a different being, evolved by the imagination of a race too sorely familiar with winter to mistake frost for snow.

*ll. 22-30.* This is not the only passage where Dante shows himself familiar with mountain climbing. He had clambered over the weary heights between Lerici and Turbia (*Purg.* iii), and perhaps over the Alps more than once.

A distinguished mountain-climber remarks in the *Alpine Journal* that this passage reads 'like a modern description of an Almer or a Devouassoud at work' (cited in the notes of H. F. Tozer). It is well to stress this, inasmuch as Ruskin, with a perversity not singular in his stimulating writings, asserts that Dante knew little of mountain-climbing. He did not indeed, like some modern scholars, climb for the sport of it; climbing was at certain periods of his wanderings just part of the day's work. (Ruskin's numerous *obiter dicta* on Dante have been arranged and printed in a little volume by the late Charles Eliot Norton).

The allegory here is that of the difficulty of renouncing a course of dissimulation.

*ll. 34-40.* We are descending toward the centre of a vast funnel-like hollow, the sides of which are cut by the ten concentric *bolgie* (pockets, pouches, valleys, or gullies), so that the inner bank of every one of these channels is lower than the other. The valley of the hypocrites seems unusually deep.

*ll. 45.* It is noteworthy that here only, in the whole course of the journey, through Hell does Dante allow himself to sit down by reason of weariness. The noble rebuke he receives for this weakness may be accounted one of the many devices whereby

the journey is marked as a continuous pilgrimage, the pauses in which are not for repose but for observation and instruction. Even during the long digression about Mantua Dante remains on his feet leaning against the hard parapet of the rocky viaduct (Canto xx, l. 25).

ll. 55-7. It is not enough to forsake error; one must practise active virtue, action typified by climbing the stair of the Penitential Mountain.

ll. 82-90. This passage is based upon one in the ninth book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, where all these snakes are fancifully described. There is a similar swarm in the tenth book of *Paradise Lost*.

l. 93. Heliotrope, a mineral, possibly bloodstone, which was supposed to possess the virtue of so turning the sun's rays that the wearer became invisible.

l. 100. *I* has no dot in medieval writing. These are the exceptional letters that require but a single stroke of the pen

ll. 106-11. The passage is a freely rehandled and abbreviated rendering of Ovid's lines in *Met.* xv. 393-400.

l. 114. It was then supposed that a stroke, as of epilepsy, was caused by stoppage (oppilation) of the passages through which the vital spirits went from heart to brain. Even as late as Shakespeare, literature is full of allusions to this physiology in which the vital spirits play a part similar to that now ascribed to the blood.

l. 129. Dante, who had known this John (Giovanni) Fucci, is surprised that he is not among the violent (see Canto xii). Only a debased and desperate character would rob a church. Cf. the treatment of Bardolph for stealing the 'pax of little price' (*Henry V*, iii. vi).

l. 145. The thunderstorm of war from the valley of the Magra (Lunigiana) is Moroello Malaspina, whose family received and protected Dante in 1306. There is a noble tribute to this family at the end of *Purg.* viii. The physical theory underlying the imagery here is explained in the note to *Par.* xxiii. 40-2.

## CANTO XXV

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 7. Transformations of the Five Thieves*

- 1 As soon as those his words concluded were,  
     both figs with lifted fists the robber sends,  
     yelling: 'Have at thee, God; at thee I square!'
- 4 From that time forth the serpents were my friends,  
     for one of them did then his neck entwist,  
     as who should say, 'Herewith thy speaking ends!'
- 7 Another, coiling, riveted each wrist,  
     clinching in front of him to such degree,  
     he could not any longer jerk the fist.
- 10 Ah, why, Pistoia, dost thou not decree  
     to burn thyself to ashes and so fall,  
     since thy ill deeds outdo thine ancestry?
- 13 Throughout the dark infernal circles all,  
     I saw no spirit Godward flaunt such pride,  
     not him who fell at Thebes down from the wall.
- 16 He fled away, all further word denied;  
     then saw I come a Centaur, full of spleen:  
     'Where is, where is the callous wretch?' he cried.
- 19 Harbours so many serpents not, I ween,  
     Maremma, as he had his back along  
     as far as where our lineaments begin.
- 22 Behind the nape, upon the shoulder clung  
     a dragon with his pinions wide outspread:  
     on every one he meets his fire is flung.
- 25 'That one is Cacus,' then my Master said,  
     'who in the cavern of Mount Aventine  
     has made full many a time a pool blood-red.'
- 28 He goes not with his brothers in one line,  
     by reason of his wily practice, when  
     he stole the neighbouring great herd of kine:
- 31 Wherefore his crooked actions ended then  
     beneath the blows of Hercules, who plied  
     perhaps a hundred,—but he felt not ten.'
- 34 While he was speaking thus, and past us hied  
     the centaur, there below came spirits three  
     whom neither I perceived, nor yet my Guide,

37 Until they shouted to us: 'Who are ye?'

Whereby our story to a stand was brought,  
and them alone thereafter heeded we.

40 And now it happened (for I knew them not),  
as it is wont to happen, that one shade,

to name another by some chance took thought,

43 Exclaiming: 'Where can Giansa still have stayed?'  
Whence I, to make my Guide attentive so,  
upward from chin to nose my finger laid.

46 If thou to credit what I say art slow  
now, Reader, need there be no wonderment,  
for I, who saw, can scarce consent thereto.

49 The while I raised my brows on them intent,  
there darted a six-footed serpent out

in front of one, and grappling with him blent.

52 With middle feet it clasped his paunch about,  
and flung the forward ones his arms around;  
then gashed both cheeks of him the gaping snout.

55 With hinder feet outspread the thighs it bound,  
thrusting its tail between them, and behind  
upward extending it, the loins enwound.

58 So never did the barbed ivy bind  
a tree up, as the reptile hideous  
upon another's limbs its own entwined.

61 They clave together,—hot wax cleaveth thus,—  
and interfused their colours in such wise  
that neither now appeared the same to us:

64 Just as in burning paper doth arise  
along before the flame a colour brown  
which is not black as yet, and the white dies.

67 The other two each shouted, looking on,  
'O me, Agnello, how thou alterest!  
Lo, thou'rt already neither two nor one!'

70 Already the two heads had coalesced,  
whereby two faces seemed to be compelled  
into one face, wherein were two suppressed.

73 Now the two arms from strips quadruple swelled;  
the thighs and legs, the chest and belly grew  
to members such as never man beheld.

- 76 All former aspect there was cancelled through:  
 two and yet none the shape perverted showed,  
 and such with tardy steps away it drew.
- 79 As the eye-lizard, under the great goad  
 of dog-day heat, from hedge to hedge again  
 darts like a flash of light across the road:
- 82 So, tow'rd the bellies of the other twain  
 darting, a little fiery serpent went,  
 livid and tawny like a pepper-grain.
- 85 And in that part whence first our nourishment  
 we draw, it one of them transfix'd, then down  
 in front of him fell back, and lay distent.
- 88 The pierced one gazed, but language uttered none:  
 nay, rather yawned and never stirred a limb,  
 as if with fever or with sleep fadone.
- 91 He eyed the reptile, and the reptile him:  
 one from his wound, the other from its snout  
 smoked fiercely, and the smoke commingled dim.
- 94 Be still now, Lucan, where thou tellst about  
 wretched Sabellus and Nasidius,  
 and wait to hear what now shall be shot out!
- 97 Of Arethuse be still, Ovidius!  
 if, fabling, he converts her to a fount,  
 Cadmus to snake, I am not envious:
- 100 Because two natures never front to front  
 has he transmuted, so that both forms grew  
 each o'er the other's substance paramount.
- 103 In such wise answered each to each the two,  
 that to a fork the serpent clef't his tail,  
 and the stricken one his feet together drew.
- 106 The legs compacted, and the thighs as well,  
 in such a manner that in little space  
 the juncture left no mark discernible.
- 109 Now in the cloven tail the form we trace  
 the other forfeited; the former's skin  
 elastic grew, the other's hard apace.
- 112 I saw the arms drawn through the armpits in,  
 and the reptile's two short feet becoming long  
 by so much as the arms had shortened been.

- 115 Thereafter the hind feet together clung  
    to form the member that a man conceals,  
    and to the wretch from his, two feet were sprung.
- 118 Now while the smoke with a new colour veils  
    the one and the other, causing hair to spring  
    on one, which from the other part it peels,
- 121 One rose, and fell the other grovelling,  
    though turning not aside the cruel glare  
    whereunder each his face was altering.
- 124 The erect one drew his where the temples were,  
    and from stuff overmuch that thither went,  
    ears issued from the cheeks, hitherto bare:
- 127 And what, not running back, remained unspent,  
    sufficed to form a nose unto the face  
    and give the lips their fit apportionment.
- 130 He that lay prone, thrust forward his grimace,  
    and then his ears into his head are drawn  
    as draws the snail his feelers into place.
- 133 Lastly the tongue, which heretofore was one  
    and fit for speech, is cleft, and the cloven kind  
    in the other closes: and the smoke is gone.
- 136 The soul thus with a reptile form combined,  
    exploding hisses fled the valley through,  
    and the other, sputtering, remains behind:
- 139 Then, turning to the snake his shoulders new,  
    said to the third: 'As I along this way  
    have crawling run, will I have Buoso do.'
- 142 The seventh ballast did I thus survey  
    shifting, reshifting: here let novelty  
    excuse me, if my pen go aught astray.
- 145 And notwithstanding that mine eyes might be  
    somewhat bewildered, and my mind the same,  
    those could not flee away so covertly
- 148 But that I plainly saw Puccio the Lame:  
    and of the three companions did he keep  
    his form, alone of those at first who came;
- 151 The other, O Gaville, thou dost weep!

## NOTES

*The story of Vanni Fucci continued. Cf. the similar connexion of Cantes in xxxii-xxxiii, Paradiso v-vi, and Paradiso xxxii-xxxiii.*

I. 2. An insulting gesture called by Ancient Pistol 'the fig of Spain'.

I. 12. A reference to the desperadoes who followed Catiline — traditional founders of Pistoia.

I. 15. Capaneus (Canto xiv).

I. 19. The serpents in this and the preceding Canto are of course symbolic of the stealthy nature of the crime which they punish.

I. 20. For the Maremma, see the first note to Canto xiii.

II. 25-33. Cacus, probably an ancient cowboy of the pre-Roman Campagna, appears in legend as the cattle-thief centaur, who made the mistake of driving off the herd of a stronger personage. The Aventine may have been a wild retreat before the foundation of Rome. For the full story in vivid detail cf. *Aeneid*, Bk. VIII, from l. 193.

I. 35. These three who appear first are Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso (of the Donati or Abati), Puccio the lame. The six-footed serpent turns out to be Cianfa Donati. Finally comes Guercio of the Cavalcanti in the form of a little fiery-serpent, changing form with Buoso and taking flight in human shape. Puccio is the only one of the five who suffers no transformation. These, like the company of usurers (Canto xvi), all seem to be of distinguished families. A Brunellesco much later moulded the famous dome; Dante's wife was of the Donati, and his best friend a Cavalcante.

II. 40-5. The manner in which Dante gradually gathers, by attentive listening to their talk, the names of four of the five Florentine thieves, is an example of his unobtrusive art. The gesture with the finger beside chin and nose is frequent in Italy.

I. 69.      'Property was thus appalled  
                That the self was not the same,  
                Single nature's double name  
                Neither two nor one was called.'

(*The Phoenix and the Turtle.*)

If Shakespeare be the author of the poem, the lines form one of several passages in which he appears to owe an idea or a graphic phrase to Dante.

II. 94-102. The Poet's exultant challenge to two, whom he

esteemed among the greatest of antiquity, is fully borne out by the vividness of these scenes and the picturesque variety of the imagery. Cf. Canto iv, l. 99.

ll. 106-15. Milton surely had these lines in mind when he described the transformation of Satan. *Paradise Lost*, x. 511-14:

'His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,  
His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining  
Each other....'

But the Miltonic lines suffer by comparison with Dante's vivid rush of description cunningly merged with narrative.

ll. 144-5. The Poet seems to feel that the 'novelty' of these scenes has led him to dwell somewhat too complacently upon them; perhaps also he wishes to temper a little the bold self-confidence of his challenge to the elder poets.

l. 151. The last line refers to the only one not named, possibly out of consideration for the Cavalcanti family, to which he belonged. The spirited peasantry of the little village of Gaville had killed the scoundrel, and now weep the vendetta wreaked upon them by the family.

## CANTO XXVI

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 8. Fraudulent Counsellors: Ulysses*

- 1 Rejoice, O Florence, since thou art so great,  
thy wings are beating land and sea around,  
and even in Hell thy name is celebrate.
- 4 Among the robbers five like these I found,  
thy citizens,—whereat comes shame to me,  
nor do thy honours greatly thence abound.
- 7 But if near dawning dream be verity,  
within short while from now shalt thou perceive  
what Prato, if no other, craves for thee.
- 10 If it must be, let come without reprieve;  
serene the mind when of the worst aware:  
the older I become, the more 'twill grieve.
- 13 We parted thence, and up along the stair  
the spur-stones made before for our descent,  
my Guide remounted now, and drew me there
- 16 And as the solitary way we went  
amid the crags and splinters of the span,  
the foot without the hand had been forspent.
- 19 Then sorrowed I, and sorrow now again.  
when I direct my thoughts to what I viewed,  
and curb my genius from the course it ran,
- 22 Lest it from Virtue turn to truanthood;  
so that if favouring star or higher grace  
have given me aught, I forfeit not that good.
- 25 During that season when from us his face  
he least conceals whose light the world doth fill;  
what time the fly unto the gnat gives place,
- 28 The peasant who is resting on the hill  
sees many a firefly down along the dale,  
perhaps where he doth gather grapes and till:
- 31 With flames so many the eighth pit of Hell  
was everywhere agleam, as I beheld  
on coming where I saw the bottom well.
- 34 And even as he whom bears avenged of old  
looked on Elijah's parting chariot  
when straight the way to Heaven the horses held;

- 37 For with the eyesight could he follow not  
so that aught other than the flame was seen  
slitting aloft, a fading cloudy spot;
- 40 Thus moved along the throat of the ravine  
each flame, for none of them the theft unlock,  
though every flame a sinner wraps within.
- 43 I stood to look upon the bridge of rock,  
erect, so that, did not a jut prevent,  
to make me fall had been no need of shock.
- 46 And when my Leader saw me thus intent,  
he said: 'The spirits in the fires abide,  
each swathed within the burning element.'
- 49 'Through hearing thee, my Master,' I replied,  
'am I more certain; but what thou dost say  
I had surmised and would have asked. O Guide,
- 52 Who is within that flame which comes this way,  
whose cloven top seems rising from the pyre  
where once Eteocles with his brother lay?'
- 55 'Ulysses pines,' he said, 'within that fire,  
and Diomed; thus neither goes alone  
in punishment, as neither went in ire:
- 58 And in their flame together do they groan  
the ambush of the horse, whence was to come  
the noble seed by the old Romans sown;
- 61 There weep the guile whereby, though dead and dumb,  
*Deidamia still Achilles wails;*  
and there they pay for the Palladium.'
- 64 'If they within those sparks can tell their tales,'  
said I, 'O Master, much I pray thee, pray  
until my prayer a thousandsfold avails,
- 67 That thou wilt not refuse me leave to stay  
until the horned flame comes hither nigh:  
thou seest with what desire I lean that way.'
- 70 'Thy prayer deserves all praise,' he made reply,  
'and therefore I accept it; none the less  
take heed thou to thy tongue all speech deny:
- 73 Leave me to speak, for I already guess  
what thou desirkest. Seeing that these were Greek,  
perhaps they might be shy of thine address.'

- 76 After the flame with the divided peak  
had come where time and place to him seemed due,  
I heard my Leader in this manner speak:
- 79 'O ye, within one fire remaining two,  
if I deserved of you in life, if I  
or much or little merited of you
- 82 When in the world I wrote the verses high,  
do not move on, but one of you declare  
whither, being lost, he went away to die.'
- 85 One horn, the mightier of the ancient pair,  
with murmuring began to quiver then,  
even as a flame made weary by the air.
- 88 Waving the summit back and forth again,  
thereafter, like a speaking tongue, the flame  
flung forth a voice and spoke as follows: 'When
- 91 Of Circe I had taken leave,—the same  
who held me near Gaeta a year and more,  
ere yet Aeneas gave it such a name,—
- 94 Nor tender love of son, nor pity for  
my aged father, nor affection due  
that should have cheered Penelope, o'erbore
- 97 The ardour that was in me to pursue  
experience of the world, that I might be  
in human vices versed and virtue too:
- 100 But I put forth on the deep open sea  
with but one vessel, and that little train  
which hitherto had not deserted me.
- 103 Both of the shores I saw as far as Spain,  
Morocco, and Sardinia's isle, and so  
the other islands bathing in that main.
- 106 I and my company were old and slow  
when in upon that narrow pass we bore,  
where Hercules set up his bounds to show
- 109 That man beyond might venture nevermore.  
Here left I Seville back upon the right,  
and had left Ceuta on the other shore.
- 112 "O brothers," said I, "who are come despite  
ten thousand perils to the West, let none,  
while still our senses hold the vigil slight

- 115 Remaining to us ere our course is run,  
    be willing to forgo experience  
        of the unpeopled world beyond the sun.
- 118 Regard your origin,—from whom and whence!  
    not to exist like brutes, but made were ye  
        to follow virtue and intelligence."
- 121 With this brief speech I made my company  
    so keen to go, that scarce to be denied  
        would they have been thereafter, even by me.
- 124 And having turned the stern to morning-tide,  
    for the mad flight we plied the wingèd oar,  
        steadily gaining on the larboard side.
- 127 Night saw the constellations more and more  
    of the other pole, and ours at such descent  
        that it rose not above the ocean-floor.
- 130 Five times rekindled and as many spent  
    the light beneath the moon did wane away,  
        since to the passage of the deep we went,
- 133 When there appeared to us a mountain, gray  
    with distance, and upreared a loftier brow  
        than I had ever seen until that day.
- 136 At this rejoiced we, but it turned to woe,  
    for out of the new land a whirling blast  
        arose and struck the vessel on the prow—
- 139 Thrice with the waters all, it whirled her fast;  
    the fourth upheaved the stern and sunk amain  
        the prow, as pleased Another, till at last
- 142 The ocean had above us closed again.'

## NOTES

*Souls wrapped in swirling flames like Elijah's 'chariot of fire', but numerous as fireflies.*

ll. 7-9. Prato, although so near Florence, having distinct self-consciousness and local pride, is naturally impatient of subjection. The thought that dreams coming just before dawn are prophetic—a common belief in ancient times—is most beautifully developed at the beginning of *Purg.* ix.

ll. 25-32. When Dante, usually so terse, chooses to say a thing in a round-about way, he does so in a series of pictures. Here he places the reader in an Italian hillside vineyard at the close of a long summer day, when the fly gives place to the mosquito, to look down with the tired peasant at the fascinating splendour of the myriad fireflies.

l. 54. The story is that when the bodies of Eteocles and Polyneices were incinerated together the flame divided, showing that even in their ashes lived the wonted fires of fraternal hate.

ll. 61-3. Thetis, to save her son from a foretold fate, was so simple-minded as to place him, disguised as a girl, among the daughters of a king. The guile of Ulysses consisted in persuading the hero to break from this effeminate life, forsaking his sweetheart Deidamia. But all these classical references are familiar.

ll. 72-5. It is hard not to find a symbol in the modest forbearing of Dante, despite his yearning, from direct speech with the Greeks. Likewise Petrarch, although a half-century nearer to the Renaissance, never mastered the language of Homer. Both looked, like Moses from Pisgah, to the land of heart's desire.

l. 90 to end. The noble tale of Ulysses, as well as the preceding splendid series of images, is in refreshing contrast to the horrible scenes we have witnessed. Dante owes nothing to Homer, whom he could not read. It is interesting to contrast Tennyson's ornate rehandling of this plain tale.

ll. 112-17. The Pillars of Hercules (on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar) marked for Dante as for the ancients, the western limit of the habitable world. The southern hemisphere was supposed to be covered by the ocean. To embark upon this unknown deep was to encounter real dangers enhanced by imagined and unimaginable terrors.

l. 133. The mountain is supposed to be that of Purgatory. The age of the great voyagers was yet distant, and anything could be imagined, for the other side of the world was as unknown as is the other side of the moon.

**CANTO XXVII. Eighth Circle: Pouch 8. Guido da Montefeltro and Pope Boniface**

- 1 The flame became erect and quiet now  
to speak no more, and now was passing on,  
nor did the gentle Poet disallow;
- 4 When after it there came another one  
which made us eye its summit, whence found vent  
a vague and indistinguishable tone.
- 7 As the Sicilian bull, which with lament  
of him was first to bellow ('twas his due!)  
who gave it fashion with his instrument,
- 10 Bellowed with voice of every victim new,  
so that, for all it was of brazen plate,  
yet it appeared with anguish stricken through:
- 13 Thus, having at their source not any gate  
nor outlet from the fire, into its mode  
of speech were turned the words disconsolate.
- 16 But afterward, when they had found a road  
up through the point, transmitting it the same  
quiver in passing which the tongue bestowed,
- 19 We heard it say: 'O thou at whom I aim  
my voice, who spak'st the tongue of Lombardy,'  
saying,—"Now go, no more I urge, O flame!"'
- 22 To pause and speak be irksome not to thee,  
what though I come a little late withal:  
thou seest, although I burn, it irks not me.
- 25 If from that sweet Italian land thou fall  
but now into this world of blinded souls,—  
for thence I came with my transgression all,—
- 28 Say, have they peace or war, the Romagnoles?  
for I was from the mountains there between  
Urbino and the range whence Tiber rolls.'
- 31 Still was I bended down, with eager mien,  
when now my Leader touched me on the side,  
saying: 'Speak thou,—Italian he has been.'
- 34 And I, well knowing what should be replied,  
began discoursing without hesitation:  
'O spirit, thou who dost thereunder hide,

- 37 In thy Romagna ever inclination  
     for war her tyrants harbour; but no plans  
     for open war left I in preparation.
- 40 As stood she many a year, Ravenna stands:  
     there doth the Eagle of Polenta brood  
     so that she covers Cervia with her vans.
- 43 The town that gave proof of long fortitude,  
     and in a bloody heap the Frenchmen threw,  
     under the Green Paws now is re-subdued.
- 46 Verrucchio's ancient Mastiff and the new,  
     who ill disposal of Montagna made,  
     still flesh their fangs where they are wont to do.
- 49 Lamone's and Santerno's towns are swayed  
     by the young Lion on an argent ground,  
     'twixt summer and winter proved a renegade.
- 52 That town whereof the Savio laves the bound,  
     as set between the mountain and the plain,  
     so between tyranny and free is found.
- 55 Now who thou art I beg thee tell us twain:  
     show not more hardness than another showed,  
     so thy repute may in the world remain.'
- 58 After the fire in its peculiar mode  
     had roared awhile, the pointed tip was quaking  
     hither and yon, and then such breath bestowed:
- 61 'If I supposed myself as answer making  
     to one who ever could return on high  
     into the world, this flame should stand unshaking.'
- 64 But since none from this yawning cavity  
     ever returned alive, if truth I hear,  
     fearless of infamy, do I reply.
- 67 I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,  
     hoping to make amends, begirded so:  
     and this my hope was coming true, no fear,
- 70 But for the Priest Supreme, betide him woe!  
     who put me back into my sins of old;  
     and how and whereso I would have thee know.'
- 73 While I was yet a tenant of that mould  
     of bone and pulp my mother gave, my bent  
     was ever of the fox, not lion-bold.

- 76 I knew all wiles and ways to circumvent,  
and plied the craft of them with such avail  
that to the ends of earth the rumour went.
- 79 When I began to feel the years prevail,  
arrived that time of life when one had need  
to coil the tackle up and take in sail,
- 82 What pleased before, now grieved me: so with heed  
to penance and confession I withdrew;  
ah, hapless! and it had availed indeed.
- 85 The Prince of the new Pharisees, in view  
of Lateran, having a war in hand,—  
and not with Saracen, and not with Jew,
- 88 For all his enemies were Christian, and  
not one of them at Acre's fall was nigh,  
nor yet a trader in the Soldan's land,—
- 91 Neither his Holy Orders nor his high  
office regarded, nor that cord of mine  
which used to make more lean those girt thereby.
- 94 But as within Soractë, Constantine  
besought Sylvester heal his leprosy,  
likewise, his severed pride to medicine,
- 97 Did this man seek out as physician me:  
counsel he craved, and I deemed silence just,  
because his language drunken seemed to be.
- 100 At length he said: "Let not thy heart mistrust;  
henceforward I absolve thee: teach me how  
to level Palestrina with the dust.
- 103 I have the power to shut, as knowest thou,  
and open Heaven: whence double are the keys  
which my foregoer held not dear enow."
- 106 Constrained me weighty arguments like these,  
to such a point that silence seemed unfit:  
"Father, since thou assurest me release
- 109 From that transgression which I must commit,  
long promise with short keeping," so I said,  
"will make thee triumph in thy lofty Seat."
- 112 Saint Francis came for me, when I was dead;  
but shouted one of the black Cherubim:  
"Convey him not, nor wrong me; for instead

- 115 He must go down among my minions grim,  
because he gave the counsel fraudulent,  
from which time forth I have been dogging him.<sup>1</sup>
- 118 For none can be absolved but he repent,  
nor can a man repent and will withal,  
for contradictories do not consent."
- 121 Alas for me! O how I trembled all  
what time he took me, saying: "Can it be  
thou didst not think that I was logical?"
- 124 Down unto Minos then he carried me,  
who twined with eightfold tail his stubborn frame,  
and, after he had gnawed it furiously,
- 127 Said: "'Tis a sinner for the thievish flame":  
whence, where thou seest me, am I forlorn,  
and, going thus attired, bemoan my shame.'
- 130 When he had thus his testimony borne,  
the flame with anguished utterance withdrew,  
twisting about and tossing the sharp horn.
- 133 We passed along, my Guide and I, up to  
the next arch of the viaduct, whence showed  
that moat of Hell wherein is paid their due
- 136 To those who, severing, make up their load.

## NOTES

The astute parallel with the preceding Canto is notable. In the Paradiso we shall find explicit illustration of the principle that the spiritual state of the Christian who stoops to evil is more deplorable than that of the pagan.

I. 7. The braten bull in which were roasted alive the victims of the tyrant Phalaris, who first tested it upon its maker—very properly, subjoins Dante.

I. 28. The Romagna is a rather indeterminate but persistent designation for that part of Italy between Apennine and Adriatic, south of the Po. The men of that region are exceptionally strong and independent in character, and often turbulent in action. Cf. *Purg.* xiv. 92 and following lines.

I. 41. The Polenta family from which had sprung Francesca, and which was to be Dante's best shield.

I. 43. Forlì, where a French army had suffered a bloody defeat by the person addressed.

I. 46. The Malatesta of Rimini, the bloody, treacherous tyrants to whose sang poor Francesca had been thrown.

II. 49-53. Faenza and Imola, as well as Cesena, are named by their rivers. As in the case of Forlì the cognizance of the ruling family is mentioned. The renegade is Maghinardo of the Pagani, who is called the demon of the family in *Purgatorio* xiv. South of the Apennine, he is a Guelf; in his own country, a Ghibelline. Winter and summer, in Dantean metonymy, are north and south. The cognizance of the Pagani was 'a lion azure on a field argent' (*riso bianco*, I. 50). The 'green paws' of I. 45 designate the green lion on the shield of the Ordelassi, then masters of Forlì.

I. 56. Another, i.e. Dante himself.

I. 61. Guido da Montefeltro, the astute Christian, is contrasted to his disadvantage with the noble pagan Ulysses. There is another contrast between Guido and his son Buonconte in Purgatory (Canto v). These are three of the longer tales in the Poem.

I. 70. Pope Boniface VIII.

II. 85 ff. Palestrina (ancient Præneste), stronghold of the powerful Colonna family, could be seen from the Lateran, then the seat of the popes. Boniface, at the instance of Guido, promised amnesty and then destroyed the place. The barbarous vengeance of the Colonna at Alagna shocked even

Dante, hostile as he was to Boniface, and is sublimely commemorated in *Purg.* xx.

*ll. 94-7.* As Emperor Constantine sought out Pope Sylvester who had taken refuge in a cavern of Mount Soracte, so the Pope sought the speaker in his monastic retreat.

*ll. 112 ff.* For the soul of Guido's son, Buonconte, there is a similar contention (*Purg.* v). Both were probably suggested by the old story of Michael and the Devil contending for the body of Moses (*Jude*, 9). In both cases the truth emphasized is that salvation depends upon the state of the soul at the end. In the case of Guido the absolution of a pope proves unavailing. Similarly, in the case of Mansfred (*Purg.* iii), excommunication proves impotent.

*ll. 118-19.* So the King in *Hamlet* reasons: 'May one be pardoned and retain the offence?'

*ll. 121-9.* For the significance of the serpentine windings of the tail of Minos, see the beginning of Canto v. But his gesture in biting his tail! How all human values are reversed! Guido, after an eminently successful career at the close of which he had humbled himself to make his peace with God, finds after death the arms of the holy Francis open for him. Against him whom even Francis would pardon, the executor of Divine vengeance is singularly indignant. And it is all so sudden: 'Saint Francis came for me when I was dead!'

But even Francis cannot prevail against the devil who plants himself upon the Categorical Imperative.

'The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
Will brand us after, of whose fold we be.'

(Tennyson, *Merlin and Vivien*, ll. 760 ff.)

*l. 136.* Who add by dividing—making up their load of sin by disuniting others.

## CANTO XXVIII

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 9. Sowers of Discord*

- 1 Who ever in words released from laws of rime  
could fully of the blood and wounds report  
that now I saw, though telling many a time?
- 4 Every tongue would certainly fall short,  
because the heart and speech of humankind  
have little compass to contain such hurt.
- 7 Could ever all the people be combined  
who in Apulia wept their blood poured out  
upon the fatesful land time out of mind
- 10 By Trojans, and in that long war, the rout  
which issued in the mighty spoil of rings,  
as Livy writes, whose word we cannot doubt;
- 13 With those who bore the brunt of buffetings  
resisting Robert Guiscard; and that horde  
whose bones the plowshare to this day upflings
- 16 At Ceperano, where each Apulian lord  
proved faithless; and at Tagliacozzo's field  
where aged Erard conquered without sword:
- 19 And all their mutilated limbs revealed,  
it would be naught to that dismemberment  
in the ninth pouch obscenely unconcealed.
- 22 No cask that middle board or stave forwent  
was ever clest so wide as one I saw  
ripped from the chin clean down to fundament:
- 25 Between the legs hung down the viscera;  
the vitals showed and the soul pouch thereunder  
that turns to ordure what goes in the maw.
- 28 While I am gazing at him full of wonder  
he eyes me and both hands in breast he plants,  
saying: 'Look how I tear myself asunder,
- 31 How mangled is Mohammed! In advance  
of me with weeping goes along Alec,  
clest chin to forelock in the countenance.
- 34 And all the others whom thou here dost see  
were sowers of scandal and schismatic feud  
while living, and hence are clest so cruelly.

- 37 A devil is behind us, who with crude  
    cleavage is carving, to the edge of sword  
        putting each member of this multitude,
- 40 When we have circled round the path abhorred;  
    for lo! the gashes reunited are  
        ere we revisit that infernal lord.
- 43 But who art thou who musest on the scar,  
    perchance because reluctant to go hence  
        to punishment, self-sentenced at the bar?
- 46 'Death has not reached him yet, nor has offence,'  
    my Master answered, 'to this torment led;  
        but to procure him full experience,
- 49 It is my bounden duty, who am dead,  
    to lead him down through Hell from round to round:  
        as I speak with thee, this is truly said.'
- 52 More than a hundred, when they heard this sound,  
    stood still within the moat at me to peer,  
        forgetting in their wonder every wound.
- 55 'Well then, to Fra Dolcín this message bear,  
    since thou, perchance, wilt shortly see the sun,  
        that if he would not quickly join me here,
- 58 Let him be armed with food, or be undone  
    by the Novarese, because of stress of snow:  
        else were their victory not so lightly won.'
- 61 When he had lifted up one foot to go,  
    Mohammed spoke to me such words as those,  
        then stretched it to the ground, departing so.
- 64 Another, who with slitted gullet goes,  
    and who withal has but a single ear,  
        and close beneath the eyebrows cleft the nose,
- 67 Stopping for wonder with the rest to stare,  
    opened before that mutilated throng  
        his gullet, which was crimson everywhere,
- 70 And said: 'O thou by pangs of guilt unwrung,  
    whom up in Latin country long ago  
        I saw, unless undue resemblance wrong,
- 73 Remember, Pier da Medicina's woe  
    if thou return to see the lovely plain  
        that from Vercelli slopes to Marcabò.

- 76 And speaking then to Fano's worthiest twain,  
    Ser Guido and Ser Angioletto, say  
        that, if our foresight here be nothing vain,  
79 With sack and stone shall they be cast away  
        out of their ship, by a fell tyrant's guile,  
        and perish hard by La Cattolica.
- 82 From Cyprus westward to Majorca's isle,  
    saw never Neptune so great outrage done  
        by pirates or Argolic folk erewhile.
- 85 That traitor who sees only with the one,  
    and lords the city, sight of which one here  
        would be delighted never to have known,
- 88 Will summon them in parley to appear;  
    then so will deal that neither vow shall be  
        required against Focara's wind, nor prayer.'
- 91 And I to him: 'Show and declare to me,  
    if thou wouldest fain that word of thee be brought,  
        him who deplores that sight so bitterly.'
- 94 Therewith on a companion's jaw he caught,  
    and with rude hand the mouth he open rent,  
        crying: 'This is the wight, and he speaks not;
- 97 This, this is he who, being in banishment,  
    quenched doubt in Cæsar, saying: "To men prepared  
        delay was ever found a detriment."
- 100 Oh, how disconsolate to me appeared,  
    with tongue asunder in his gullet lopped,  
        Curio, who in his speech so greatly dared!
- 103 And one whose hands from both his wrists were chopped,  
    the stumps uplifting so athwart the gloom  
        that blood upon the face defiling dropped,
- 106 Cried out: 'To memory let Mosca come,  
    who said, alas! "A thing once done is sped!"  
        which was to Tuscan people seed of doom.'
- 109 'And death to all thy kin,' I adding said:  
    whereon he went like person crazed with rue,  
        heaping up sorrow upon sorrow's head.
- 112 But I remained to look upon that crew,  
    and saw a thing I should feel insecure  
        even to tell without assurance new,

- 115 If Conscience did not wholly reassure,  
     that good companion which emboldens man  
     beneath the conscious helm of feeling pure.
- 118 I truly saw, and seem to see again  
     a headless body going by, as passed  
     the others of that melancholy train;
- 121 And dangled by the tresses holds he fast  
     the severed head, which like a lantern shows,  
     and groans, 'Woe me!' gazing at us aghast.
- 124 Of self he made himself a lamp,—and those  
     were two in one, and one in two were they;  
     how that can be, Who so ordains, He knows.
- 127 Arriving just below the bridging way,  
     the arm with head and all uplifted he,  
     to bring the nearer what he had to say,
- 130 Which was: 'Now see the grievous penalty,  
     thou who to view the dead dost breathing go,  
     if any be as great as this one, see!
- 133 And that thou mayst bear tidings of me, know,  
     Bertran de Born am I, who counsel sell  
     did craftily on the Young King bestow,—
- 136 Made son and father each to each rebel:  
     not upon Absalom and David more  
     with wicked promptings wrought Ahithophel
- 139 Because I parted those so bound of yore,  
     woe worth the day, I carry now my brain  
     cleft from its source within my body's core.
- 142 Thus retribution doth in me obtain.'

## NOTES

*'That roast of Hell wherein is paid their due to those who, severing,  
make up their load.'*

*ll. 10-18.* Trojans for Romans; the rings picked up on the field of Cannae; Robert Guiscard, Norman conqueror of Apulia; Ceperano, an important strategical point on the river Liris. Its betrayal to the enemy is regarded as leading up to the defeat of Manfred at Benevento. Even so it is not clear why Dante should have written Ceperano for Benevento (*Purg.* iii). Tagliacozzo, where young Conradin, nephew of Manfred, was captured, was gained by the prudence of the Frenchman Erard de Valéry.

*ll. 25-31.* Mohammed was regarded as a Christian schismatic. According to Benvenuto these disgusting particulars symbolize the conversion of the good doctrine in the mind of Mohammed to pollution which infects the world.

*l. 32.* The name of the famous son-in-law and successor of Mohammed is commonly printed 'Ali'. The form 'Alee' more closely represents the sound to the English ear.

In the original it will be noted that this and its accompanying rimed lines have the final ictus or stress on the ultimate syllable. Cases of this kind are extremely infrequent—seven only in the *Inferno*. Such verses in Italian are exceedingly abrupt, almost startling. This effect cannot, of course, be imitated in translation, because of the utterly different nature of our language, which is so prevalently monosyllabic that in a long poem the ictus necessarily falls, for the most part, on the final syllable of the line, so that what is a rare exception in Italian becomes the rule with us. Our poets vary the so-called heroic verse of five beats by more or less frequent use of the hendecasyllabic verse, i.e. verse in which the final stress falls on the penultimate syllable of the line.

In the present instance the three lines (32, 34, 36) seem to have been cut off by a sharp sudden blow, like that of the scimitar which mutilated Alee.

*ll. 55-60.* Fra Dolcino wished to lead men back to apostolic simplicity and was cruelly punished after having made a brave fight. The Novarese are his pursuers, the men of Novara.

*ll. 73-5.* This Pietro (Peter) of the ruling family of the small town of Medicina in the Romagna is said to have been

persuasive in setting greater lords by the ears. Hence the emblematic slitting of the windpipe. The lovely plain is of course the regions of Lombardy and Venetia sloping from Vercelli in eastern Piedmont to the fortress of Marcabò, commanding the mouths of the Po.

*ll. 76-90.* This tyrant who sees but with one eye is Malatestino, now tyrant of Rimini, where Curio had advised Cesar not to delay his advance on Rome. Focara is a squally headland on the Adriatic near La Cattolica, between Rimini and Fano. Of the two worthies of Fano made victims of the tyrant little more is known. These warnings that Dante is asked to bear back to the world were perhaps suggested by Luke xvi. 27 ff., where Dives begs to have Lazarus go back to 'testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment'.

*l. 102.* No explanation is made why Curio should be punished for promoting an enterprise which Brutus and Cassius are punished for opposing! Curio's advice seems to be cited with approval in Dante's seventh epistle.

*l. 106.* Mosca of the Lamberti clan was he who advised the murder of young Buondelmonte, to which the origin of the great feud of the Guelfs and Ghibellines was attributed by tradition. See *Paradiso* xvi.

*l. 134.* This Provençal poet was the friend of Henry, called the Young King, eldest surviving son of Henry II of England.

## CANTO XXIX

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 10. Counterfeitors of Metals*

- 1 The many people and strange wounds did steep  
 mine eyes with tears, and made them drunken so  
 that they were craving, but to stay and weep.
- 4 But Virgil asked me: 'Whereon gazest thou?  
 what may it be that still thy sight beguiles  
 to rest upon sad mangled shades below?
- 7 Thou wast not wont to do so otherwhiles:  
 consider, wouldest thou make the count complete,  
 the valley circles two and twenty miles,
- 10 And now the moon is underneath our feet;  
 brief is the time vouchsafed us for the way,  
 and more to see than here thy glances meet.'
- 13 'Hadst thou but heeded,' did I answering say,  
 'the reason why my gaze was bended there,  
 perchance thou wouldest have granted longer stay.'
- 16 Already did my Leader forward fare,  
 I following while making my reply,  
 subjoining then thereto: 'Within that lair
- 19 Whereon so steadfastly I bent mine eye,  
 methinks a spirit of my blood complains  
 about the crime that costs down there so high.'
- 22 Then said the Master: 'Baffle no<sup>t</sup> thy brains  
 henceforth with anxious thought concerning this;  
 mind other thing, although he there remains:
- 25 For him I saw beneath the pontifice  
 menacing thee with finger vchement,  
 Geri del Bello named in the abyss.
- 28 But thou wast at that moment all intent  
 on him who once held Hautesfort,—thus the name  
 thou heardst not, nor didst look, until he went.'
- 31 'Dear Guide, the violent death that on him came,  
 for which,' said I, 'unpaid remains the score,  
 by any one a partner in the shame,
- 34 Made him indignant; whence he passed before  
 getting speech with me, if I guess aright,  
 and so has made me pity him the more.'

- 37 Thus we conversed as far as the first height  
     which from the bridge the neighbour valley shows  
         quite to the bottom, were there but more light.
- 40 When we were over the last cloister-close  
     of the Malpouches, so that to our view  
         all us lay brothers could themselves disclose,
- 43 Strange lamentations pierced me through and through,  
     which had their arrows barbed with pity all:  
         whence with my hands I shut mine ears thereto.
- 46 If from Chiana's every hospital,  
     'twixt July and September, all the sick.  
         Maremma's and Sardinia's withal,
- 49 Were in one trench together crowded thick:  
     so woeful was it here, and such a scent  
         as out of putrid limbs is wont to reek.
- 52 Upon the final bank we made descent  
     from the long bridge, and still did leftward fare;  
         and then my vision, growing keener, went
- 55 Down tow'rd the bottom of the pocket, where  
     the High Lord's handmaid, Equity condign,  
         punishes falsifiers apportioned there.
- 58 It was no greater sorrow, I opine,  
     to see Ægina's people all infirm,—  
         what time the atmosphere was so malign
- 61 That animals, down to the little worm,  
     fell stricken, and the ancient people then,  
         as poets for a certainty affirm,
- 64 Were from the seed of ants restored again,—  
     than now to see, throughout that dim abode,  
         languish in ghastly stack the souls of men.
- 67 They lie across the paunch, the shoulders load,  
     of one another, and some are creeping round  
         shifting their place along the dismal road.
- 70 Step after step we went without a sound,  
     looking, and listening to the sick ones, who  
         could not lift up their persons from the ground.
- 73 I saw, on one another leaning, two  
     (as pan is propped against a pan to dry)  
         all scab from head to heel: I never knew

- 76 A stable-boy so vigorously ply  
the currycomb because his master watches,  
or one who keeps awake unwillingly,
- 79 As each of these incontinently scratches  
himself with biting nails, for frenzy mad  
of itching, which no other succour matches.
- 82 So was the tetter which their bodies clad  
slayed from them, as from bream knife scrapes the  
or other fish, if any larger had. [scales,
- 85 'O thou whose every finger thee dismails,'  
so did my Guide to one of them begin.  
'and sometimes makest pincers of thy nails,
- 88 Say if there be among those here within  
any Italian, so suffice thee thus  
thy nails forevermore upon thy skin.'
- 91 'Italians both, whose plight so hideous  
thou seest,' weeping, one replied; 'but tell,  
who art thou that dost ask concerning us?'
- 94 My Leader answered, 'Down from fell to fell  
I with this living man am travelling,  
and I came purposing to show him Hell.'
- 97 Thereat the mutual trestle sundering,  
that couple turned round to me tremblingly,  
with others who by echo heard the thing.
- 100 The gentle Master then drew close to me,  
suggesting: 'To thy mind expression give.'  
And as he willed, began I: 'So may be
- 103 Your fame in the first world not fugitive,  
fading from human mind without a trace,  
but may it under many a sun still live,
- 106 Declare me who ye are and of what race:  
do not, I pray, the revelation dread  
because of the foul punishment's disgrace.'
- 109 'I was an Aretine,' one answering said,  
'Siena's Albert cast me in the fire;  
but what I died for nowise hither led.'
- 112 'Tis true I said, as did the whim inspire,  
that I could wing the air in flight: whereon  
he, who had little wit, but fond desire,

- 115 Would fain be taught that cunning, and alone  
     because no Dædalus I made him then,  
     let me be burned by one who called him son.
- 118 But for my alchemy in the world of men  
     did Minos, who is not allowed to err,  
     doom me to this last pocket of the "ten".'
- 121 Then to the Poet I: 'What people were  
     ever so vain as are the Sienese?  
     certainly not the French, by very far!'
- 124 The other leper, hearing words like these,  
     spoke up: 'Except me Stricca, resolute  
     for temperance in spending, if you please;
- 127 And Niccoldò, the first to institute  
     the costly application of the clove  
     within the garden where such seed takes root;
- 130 Except the club where Caccia d'Ascian strove  
     to squander his great wood and vinery,  
     and Abbagliato his vast wit to prove.
- 133 But that thou know who thus doth second thee  
     against the Sienese, now sharpen so  
     thine eye that well my face responds, and see!
- 136 I am the shadow of Capocchio  
     who did by alchemy false metals shape;  
     and, if I well descry thee, thou shouldst know
- 139 The curious skill that made me Nature's ape.'

## NOTES

Crooked with itching stabs and scratching busily with their nails, the falsifiers of four different kinds (alchemists, impostors, debasers of coin, malicious liars) are afflicted with disguising or deforming diseases. As everywhere, there is some congruity of punishment and sin. Here, as at the close of the next Canto, Virgil takes Dante to task for being too deeply absorbed. Dante's apparent adhesion to the un-Christian custom of the vendetta is one of the several inconsistencies between creed and sentiment, without which he would not be like all the rest of us.

ll. 27-9. Geri, a cousin of Dante's father, had been killed by one of the Sacchetti. The two families became formally reconciled about a score of years after the Poet's death. He 'who once held Hautesfort' is Bertran de Born.

ll. 46-51. Undrained malarial regions. The Tuscan Maremma, so often referred to, is the wild moorland country near the seaboard south-west of Siena. The river Chiana stagnated in the level, marshy region between Tiber and Arno, where Lake Trasimene lies. The Arno, indeed, in prehistoric time, flowed into the Tiber. The region is now drained.

ll. 58-64. One of Ovid's tales. *Met.* vii.

ll. 103-8. The sympathy betrayed by these words and the whole bearing of the Poet is in strong contrast to his indignant contempt for the illustrious Guido da Montefeltro (in Canto xxvii).

ll. 109-17. The story is that a bishop of Siena, who called Albert son, ordered the burning of Griffolino, the Aretine, who was probably an ingenious precursor of those who have invented the aeroplane. Such were of old the rewards of the inventor and the student of nature! Griffolino is punished in both worlds.

l. 125. Examples of fashionable, ostentatious spendthrifts. Cloves imported from the far East at enormous expense. Siena, gay, elegant, rich, was the garden in which such seed took root. The club was of young men of fashion who tried to see which one could run through his fortune most swiftly and merrily. They were eminently successful in this enterprise, and their fame is still alive in their beautiful city.

l. 139. Shakespeare calls Julio Romano the ape of nature, one of the instances in which he may be echoing our Poet.

## CANTO XXX

*Eighth Circle: Pouch 10. Master Adam and Sinon of Troy*

- 1 In time when Juno had so angry grown  
for Semele, against the Theban strain,  
as she had more than once already shown,
- 4 Then Athamas was stricken so insane  
that he, his very wife encountering,  
burdened on either hand with children twain,
- 7 Cried out: 'Spread we the nets for capturing  
the lioness and whelps upon this ground';  
then, stretching forth his claws unpitying,
- 10 He took the one Learchus named, and round  
whirled him, and round, and dashed him on a stone  
herself, then, with her other charge, she drowned.
- 13 Again, when Fortune had so overthrown  
the arrogance of Trojans all too brave,  
that king and kingdom were alike undone,
- 16 Poor Hecuba, a wretched captive slave,  
when she had looked on dead Polyxena,  
and afterward, beside the ocean wave,
- 19 The body of her Polydorus saw,  
barked like a dog, out of her senses then;  
so grief had wrung the soul of Hecuba.
- 22 But never furies came to Theban ken,  
or Trojan, of so much ferocity  
in goading brutes, much less the limbs of men,
- 25 As in two pallid, naked shades saw I,  
running along and biting in such kind  
as does the boar when loosened from the sty.
- 28 One seized upon Capocchio, and behind  
his neck-joint fixed a fang so murderous  
it made the solid rock his belly grind.
- 31 Said the Aretine, who stood there tremulous:  
'That goblin's Gianni Schicchi, and insane  
he goes about to mangle others thus.'
- 34 'Oh!' said I, 'so the other may refrain  
from planting fangs in thee, let me persuade  
thee tell who 'tis ere it dart hence again.'

- 37 And he to me: 'That is the ancient shade  
of Myrrha, who in her abandoned mood  
illicit love unto her father made.  
42 Coming to sin with him, she understood  
to take an alien form; as who withdrew  
yonder, to win the queen mate of the stud,  
43 Made bold Buoso Donati's form to induce  
in counterfeit preventment, making will  
and testament in legal order true.'  
46 And when the rabid pair had passed, who still  
had riveted my gaze, I turning eyed  
the other malefactors started so ill.  
49 One fashioned like a lute I then espied,  
if only at the groin were amputate  
the thighs, just at the point where they divide.  
52 The heavy dropsy which doth so mismate  
the limbs with ill-concocted humour thin,  
that face and loin are disproportionate,  
55 Compelled him so to hold his lips atwin  
as hecticies do, for out of thirst he bent  
upward the one, the other tow'rd his chin.  
58 'O ye exempted from all punishment  
in this grim world and why I do not know,'—  
so he began,—'ah! look and be intent  
61 Upon the mode of Master Adam's woe:  
living, I had enough of what man wills,  
now crave one drop of water here below.  
64 The rivulets to Arno from the hills  
descending through the Casentino green,  
cooling and freshening their little rills,  
67 Ever and not in vain, by me are seen,  
because their image is more withering  
than the disease that makes my visage lean.  
70 Rigorous Justice with its goading sting,  
takes vantage of the very region where  
I sinned, to give my sighs a nimbler wing.  
73 There is Romena, where the coin that bare  
the Baptist's image did I counterfeit:  
for which I left my body burnt up there.'

- 76 But could I Alexander's wretched sprite,  
or Guido's, or their brothers', down here see,  
for Fontebranda I would not give the sight.
- 79 One is already in, if truthful be  
what the mad shades that circle round me say;  
but since my limbs are tied, what steads it me?
- 82 If yet enough of nimbleness had they  
to carry me an inch a hundred year,  
already had I started on the way
- 85 To seek him 'mid this squalid rabble here,  
although eleven miles the round deploy,  
nor less than half a mile across appear.
- 88 Through them in such a family am I:  
'twas they who instigated me to stamp  
the florins with three carats of alloy.'
- 91 'What wretched two,' said I, 'lie, scamp by scamp  
together, hard upon thy right confine,  
recking, like to wet hand in winter's damp?'
- 94 And he replied: 'I found them here supine,  
when to this trough I rained; they've moved no more  
since then, nor ever will they, I opinc.'
- 97 She, who false witness against Joseph bore,  
he, Sinon the false Greek from Troy: intense  
the fever is that makes them reek so sore.'
- 100 And one of them, who seemed to take offence  
at being mentioned in a mode so mean,  
fisted forthwith his hidebound corpulence,
- 103 Which rumbled, as it were a tambourine;  
but Master Adam planted in his face  
an elbow no less vigorous, I ween,
- 106 Saying to him: 'Though I be held in place  
because of my obesity of loin,  
I have a limber arm for such a case.'
- 109 'When going to the stake,' did he rejoin,  
'thou didst not have an elbow half so free;  
but so, and more, when thou wast making coin.'
- 112 'That,' quoth the dropsied one, 'is verity;  
thou didst not witness to the truth so well  
when of the truth at Troy they questioned thee.'

- 115 'Told I false tale, false coinage didst thou tell,'  
     said Sinon, 'for one fault am I undone,  
     but thou for more than other fiend of Hell.'
- 118 'Bethink thee of the horse, thou perjured one,'  
     the sinner of inflated belly cries,  
     'that the world knows it, be thy malison.'
- 121 'Thy malison the thirst that cracks and dries  
     thy tongue,' the Greek said, 'and the filthy swill  
     which makes that paunch a barrier to thine eyes.'
- 124 'Thy mouth is gaping open to thine ill  
     as usual,' thereon the coiner said,  
     'for if I thirst and flux my belly fill,
- 127 Thou hast the sever and the aching head;  
     to lap the mirror of Narcissus, few  
     the words of invitation thou wouldest need.'
- 130 While I was listening absorbed,—'Now do  
     go staring on!' the Master said to me,  
     'a little more and we shall quarrel too.'
- 133 Now when I heard him speak thus angrily,  
     I turned me round toward him with such shame  
     that still it circles through my memory.
- 136 And even as he who of his harm doth dream,  
     and, dreaming, doth to be a dreamer sigh,  
     craving what is, as if it did but seem,
- 139 Such, without power of utterance, grew I:  
     longing to bring, I brought excuses in,  
     yet did not think myself excused thereby.
- 142 'Less shame would purge away a greater sin  
     than thine has been,' at this the Master cried,  
     'therefore disburden thee of all chagrin;
- 145 And count that I am ever at thy side,  
     if it fall out again that Fortune place  
     thee where in such a brabble people bide:
- 148 Because desire to hear the like is base.'

## NOTES

*Falsifiers: Personators, Counterfeitors, Malicious Accusers.*

ll. 1-12. Juno brought woe upon the royal house of Thebes on account of her jealousy of Semele, daughter of Cadmus and mother of Bacchus by Jupiter. Ino, sister of Semelë, who had cared for Bacchus in his childhood, was punished as described here through the insanity of her husband, Athamas.

ll. 13-21. Dante knew nothing of 'Thebes or Pelops' line or the tale of 'Troy divine' except as told by the Latin poets. These terrible details of the legends of Ino and Hecuba are derived from Ovid. How much more would Hecuba have been to him had he been able to read *The Trojan Women* of Euripides, of which Gilbert Murray has made the glowing translation!

l. 31. See last Canto, lines 109 ff. and note.

l. 32. This gentleman of the house of Cavalcante was so famous an impersonator that his son appears to have adopted the ape as a family emblem (cf. Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary*). His story or legend has recently been popularized by Puccini's comic opera, *Gianni Schicchi*.

ll. 37-41. The sensational tale of Myrrha is found in Ovid, *Metam.* x. Dante felt that she deserved worse punishment than that of Dido and Tristram. Since Dante is fond of coupling classical with Biblical examples, it is rather strange that the similar incest practised by the daughters of Lot is not mentioned (*Genesis*, xix). Cf. lines 97-8.

l. 65. Casentino, upper valley of the Arno, above Arezzo, shut in by two chains of Apennine and closed at the north by Monte Falterona. See *Purgatorio* v and xiv. Alvernia, where St. Francis received the stigmata, overlooks the Casentino. Scene of the battle of Campaldino, in which Dante took part, and of the spiritual drama splendidly recorded in *Purgatorio* v, this lovely valley was a region upon which he dwelt in memory most fondly.

ll. 70-90. The florin had on one side the image of John the Baptist and on the other the Florentine lily. This and the Venetian ducat were the standard gold coins of those ages. As the credit of the Republic depended upon the faith that all the world had in the florin, to tamper with the coin amounted to treason.

Counts of Romagna who, being in debt, employed Master

Adam, the famous Brescian expert, to debate the flotin. The picturesque ruin of Romena, and the nearly dried-up Fontebranda that supplied it with water, are still there. That region and others, which in Dante's time were well wooded and well watered, are now denuded of forest and relatively arid.

*I. 86.* In the ninth pouch the circumference is twenty-two miles (*Canto xxix*, l. 9). The Pit is therefore a rapidly narrowing funnel, enormously wide at the top.

*II. 97-8.* Potiphar's wife and Sinon the inventor of the famous 'wooden horse'. Such parallel instances from Scripture and classic Greek or Roman legend are a constant feature of the *Purgatorio*.

*I. 117.* Every single counterfeited flotin being reckoned as a separate sin.

*I. 128.* In this smart retort Master Adam shows a familiarity with Greek mythology which comes well in play in such a contest of wits with the Homeric deceiver. There may be some moderns who will not resent being told that the mirror of Narcissus is a pool of clear water.

*II. 133 ff.* Dante's shame is, perhaps, not so much for his idle curiosity as at being for the first time treated with something like contempt by the dignified Virgil. It is incident to our Poet's very human nature that he should be for the moment diverted by this lively exchange of amenities between the Greek falsifier and the Italian forger. We should not forget that this Poem is a record of the author's spiritual life with all its lights and shadows. If it be, as he terms it, 'the sacred poem', it is one to which not only *Heaven* has set its hand, but also *Earth* (see beginning of *Par. xxv*). If men have called it Divine, he himself called it simply his Comedy, thus greatly enlarging the scope of the art of comedy.

## CANTO XXXI

*Descent: The Giants Towering around the Pit*

- 1 One selfsame tongue first bit these cheeks of mine,  
suffusing both of them with bashful blood,  
and then held forth to me the medicine.
- 4 Even so the lance (as I have understood)  
of Achilles and his father, was the source  
at first of evil guerdon and then good.
- 7 With backs to that sad vale, we took our course  
up by the bank engirding it around,  
traversing this with truce to all discourse.
- 10 Here less than night and less than day we found,  
whence little way before my sight could fare;  
but now I heard a bugle so resound
- 13 That thunder would be feeble to its blare:  
whereat mine eyes were counter to it cast  
upon one spot, and wholly centred there.
- 16 After the woeful battle, when at last  
was lost to Charlemagne the holy array,  
Roland blew not so terrible a blast.
- 19 Not long I held my head bended that way  
when many a lofty tower appeared to rise;  
whence I: 'What is this city, Master, say?'
- 22 And he replied to me: 'Because thine eyes  
traverse the darkness through too wide a space,  
befalls that fancy wanders in such wise.'
- 25 Well shalt thou see, arriving at that place,  
how from afar the sense deceived may be:  
whence somewhat forward spur thyself apace.'
- 28 Taking me by the hand then tenderly,  
'Ere yet,' continued he, 'we farther go,  
so that the truth appear less strange to thee,
- 31 Not towers are these, but giants, must thou know  
and in the Pit about the bank are they,  
from the navel downward, one and all below.'
- 34 As when the mist is vanishing away,  
little by little through the blotted air  
the gaze shapes out whatever hidden lay:

- 37 So, through the dense and darksome atmosphere  
piercing, while ever nearer to the bound,  
forsook I error to encounter fear.
- 40 For, as with circling mural turrets crowned  
Montereggione stands, from the opening  
emerged half figures, turreting around
- 43 The margin that doth all the Pit enring,  
of horrible giants whom Jove from the sky  
still with his thunderbolt is threatening.
- 46 I could the face of one by now descry,  
breast, shoulders, and of belly portion great,  
and either arm depending by the thigh.
- 49 Certainly Nature, ceasing to create  
such living beings, showed exceeding sense  
these ministers of Mars to abrogate:
- 52 And if of elephant and whale repents  
she nowise, he who subtly looks will find  
of justice and discretion evidence;
- 55 Because where the equipment of the mind  
combines with force and malice criminal,  
no bulwark can be made by humankind.
- 58 His face appeared to me as huge and tall  
as is Saint Peter's Pine-cone there at Rome,  
with the other bones in due proportion all:
- 61 So that the bank, which was an apron from  
his middle down, showed upward of his size  
so much that, boasting to his hair to come,
- 64 Three Frisians would have made it good nowis  
for I beheld of him thirty full palms  
down from the place where man the mantle;
- 67 'Rafel mai amech zabi almi,'  
the mouth ferocious began bellowing,  
to which were not befitting sweeter psalms.
- 70 To him called out my Leader: 'Stupid thing!  
stick to thy horn; contrive to make it serve  
thine anger, or whatever passion sting.'
- 73 Search at thy neck and there wilt thou observe  
the cord that makes it fast, O soul confused!  
and see the horn thy mighty breast becurve.'

- 76 And then to me: 'He hath himself accused;  
 this one is Nimrod, through whose evil mood  
 one language in the world is not still used.'
- 79 Leave him, for empty speaking were not good:  
 since every language is to him the same  
 as his to others, of none understood.'
- 82 We therefore journeyed on, with constant aim  
 toward the left, and at a crossbow shot  
 we found one far more fierce and huge of frame.
- 85 The master smith to bind him know I not,  
 but he was holding out his left hand bound  
 in front of him, the right behind drawn taut
- 88 By a cable chain, which held him so enwound  
 from the neck down, that on the part displayed  
 as many as five coils begirt him round.
- 91 'This arrogant soul was bent,' my Leader said,  
 'to try conclusions with almighty Jove,  
 whence in such fashion is his meed repaid.'
- 94 His name is Ephialtes; he did prove,  
 when giants frightened gods, his force immense:  
 the arms he brandished never will he move.'
- 97 And I to him: 'I would, if naught prevents,  
 that of the measureless Briareus  
 these eyes of mine might have experience.'
- 100 'Antaeus shalt thou see,' he answered thus,  
 'hard by, articulate, unfettered,—he  
 to bottom of all bad shall carry us.'
- 103 'Tis a far cry to him thou wouldest see;  
 made fast is he, and fashioned like this one,  
 save that his features more ferocious be.'
- 106 Earthquake aforetime there was surely none  
 of force to rock a turret as when grim  
 Ephialtes sudden shook himself thereon.
- 109 I feared death never as I did from him,  
 nor need had been of more beyond the dread,  
 had I not seen his gyves on every limb.
- 112 Farther along we then our footsteps sped,  
 and reached Antaeus standing forth ells five  
 above the rocky verge, without the head.

- 115 'O thou who sawest the fateful valley give  
glory to Scipio, made heir of fame  
when Hannibal and his host turned fugitive,  
118 And broughtest a thousand lions there as game,  
and through whom, hadst thou helped thy brothers  
in the high warfare, some appear to deem [once  
121 That victory had gone to the earthborn sons:  
do not disdain now down to carry us  
where frost Cocytus locks. Such orisons  
124 Are not for Typhon nor for Tityus;  
this man can give what here ye are craving for:  
wherfore stoop down, nor curl thy muzzle thus.  
127 He in the world can yet thy fame restore:  
for still he lives and waits long life, unless  
Grace call him to herself his time before.'
- 130 The Master thus; and he in eagerness  
took up my Leader in those hands outspread  
whence Hercules once felt the mighty stress.  
133 And when he felt their pressure, Virgil said:  
'Come hither, that I may enclasp thee quite';  
then of himself and me one fardel madc.  
136 Such as the Carisenda seems to sight  
of one beneath its leaning, when a cloud  
goes over, and the tower hangs opposite:  
139 Just so Antaeus seemed to me who stood  
watching to see him lean; and it was then  
I could have wished to go by other road.  
142 But lightly down he laid us in the fen  
that Lucifer with Judas prisons fast:  
nor lingered there thus leaning, but again  
145 Rose up and up, as in a ship the mast.

## NOTES

*Emerging from the tenth and last of Malpouches, the Poets cross a plain in the midst of which is the Pit, surrounded and sentinelled by giants.*

ll. 4-6. This magic spear, of power to kill and cure, fascinated the symbolizing mind of the Middle Ages.

l. 18. According to the *Chanson de Roland*, after the defeat at Roncesvalles the horn of the dying Roland (Orlando) was heard by Charlemagne at a distance of thirty leagues.

l. 41. Montereggione still stands, as here described, a circular turreted wall surrounding a village, a few miles north of Siena, of whose domains it was once a strategic point.

l. 59. An enormous antique cone, some ten feet high, of gilded bronze, now in the garden of the Vatican. For interesting citations concerning the history of this *pina*, see Longfellow's notes.

l. 64. Three men of tall stature placed end to end would not have equalled his height from the waist up.

l. 67. This gibberish, like that at the beginning of Canto vii, is not meant to be understood.

ll. 115-21. The first battle here referred to is that of Zama where Hannibal met his Waterloo; the other that of Phlegra (cf. Canto xiv, l. 58). Antaeus is said by Lucan to have had his abode in a cavern near Zama.

l. 136. Carisenda (or Garisenda) is one of a pair of leaning towers standing side by side at Bologna. This is 160 feet high; the other, which slants less, 320. Perhaps the Carisenda was once as high as its mate. Dante's choice of this, rather than of the more beautiful and famous tower at Pisa, is one of many reasons for thinking him to have been a student at Bologna. The writer has tested the vividness of the comparison under the slant both of this tower and that of Pisa. The impression is strong that the tower is falling.

ll. 142 ff. Lines 143, 145 of the Italian text present another rare instance like that explained in the note to l. 32 of Canto xxviii.

The word 'lievemente' (lightly) certainly indicates nimble rather than gentle action. The temper of Antaeus is as far as possible from that of Virgil when he set Dante down on the top of the rough cliff (cf. close of Canto xix).

## CANTO XXXII

Ninth Circle: *Caina; Antenora*

- 1 Had I such harsh and grating times as must  
be most in keeping with the dismal Pit  
where all the other crags converging thrust,
- 4 I would press out the juice of my conceit  
more perfectly: but since 'tis otherwise  
not without fear I come to speak of it:
- 7 Because it is no frolic enterprise  
to plot the ground of all the universe,  
*nor for a tongue that Mama and Papa cries.*
- 10 But be those Ladies helpers in my verse,  
who helped Amphion Thebes to close and keep,  
that from the fact the word be not diverse.
- 13 O dwellers in the unrecorded deep,  
rabble beyond all others born amiss,  
better had ye on earth been goats or sheep!
- 16 When we were down within the dark abyss  
beneath the giant's feet, but far below,  
and yet I gazed at the high precipice,
- 19 I heard it said to me: 'Look how thou go:  
let not thy soles betumble as they pass  
the heads of weary brothers full of woe.'
- 22 Whereat I turned, and saw there a morass  
before and underfoot, and frost thereon  
made semblance not of water but of glass.
- 25 The Austrian Danube never laid upon  
her current in the winter veil so thick,  
nor, far beneath the freezing sky, the Don,
- 28 As here there was: so that if Tambernic  
or Pietrapana had tumbled in that glade,  
not even the border would have given a creak.
- 31 And as the frogs to croak are often laid  
with muzzle out of water, when alone  
of frequent gleaning dreams the peasant-maid:
- 34 Livid to where the blush of shame is shown,  
here shades in ice betrayed their sufferance  
setting their teeth to the stork's monotone.

- 37 Every one was casting down his glance:  
     the cold is proved by chattering of the jaw,  
     and the heart's agony by the eye askance.
- 40 When I had looked around awhile, I saw  
     down at my feet two shades so close-embraced  
     their fell of hair was mingled. 'By what law,'
- 43 Said I, 'have ye the breasts so interlaced;  
     who are ye, tell?' Back then their necks they bent,  
     and when their faces up to me were raised,
- 46 Their eyes, whose moisture yet within was pent,  
     brimmed over at the lids, whereon the cold  
     congealed the tears between and locked the vent.
- 49 Never did clamp two strips of scantling hold  
     so stiffly; whence like he-goats rancorous  
     butted the two, in anger uncontrolled.
- 52 And one, bereft both ears by frost, spoke thus,  
     still holding down the face lest I discern:  
     'Why make a looking-glass so long of us?
- 55 Dost thou for knowledge of this couple yearn,  
     the valley whence descends Bisenzio  
     their father Albert held, and they in turn.
- 58 They issued from one body: thou mayst go  
     questing Caïna through, and find no shade  
     deserving more in gelantine to show:
- 61 Not him the hand of Arthur open laid,  
     at one blow piercing breast and shadow, nor  
     Focaccia even, not him who with his head
- 64 So hinders me that I cannot see before:  
     one Sassol Mascheroni,—estimating  
     that thou art Tuscan, I need say no more.
- 67 And that I be not put to further prating,  
     know me for Camicion de' Pazzi, still  
     exoneration from Carlino waiting.'
- 70 Then saw I myriad faces for the chill  
     grinning like dogs: whence shudders manifold  
     seize me at frozen pools, and ever will.
- 73 While way toward the Centre did we hold  
     whereto all weights converge in unison,  
     and I was trembling in the eternal cold,

- 76 Whether by will, or fate, or fortune done,  
I know not; but among the heads somehow  
I struck my foot full in the face of one.
- 79 Wailing he yelled at me: 'Why tramplest thou?  
unless to double vengeance for the day  
of Montaperti, why molest me now?'
- 82 And I: 'Now, Master, make a little stay,  
that I through him may rid me of a doubt:  
then shalt thou hast me as thou wilt away.'
- 85 My Leader stopped; and I, now turned about  
to him, still bitterly blaspheming there,  
said: 'Who art thou on others crying out?'
- 88 'Nay, who art thou?' he answered, 'that dost fare  
through Antenora, trampling jowl and crown,  
so that, wert thou alive, 'twere ill to bear!'
- 91 'Alive I am, and cravest thou renown,'  
I answered, 'dear to thee may be the boon  
if with my other notes I put thee down.'
- 94 'The contrary I crave.' quoth that poltroon,  
'take thyself off the nuisance to abate,  
for thou cajoolest ill on this lagoon.'
- 97 Then by the scalp I seized upon him straight  
exclaiming: 'Thou must tell what thou art called  
or little hair be left upon thy pate!'
- 100 But he retorted: 'Thou canst strip me bald,  
*yet shall not what I am be shown or said*  
what though a thousand times my head be mauled.'
- 103 My hand, now coiled with tresses of his head,  
by many a tuft was leaving it dishevelled,  
he howling, with eyes downward riveted,
- 106 When some one this loud taunt against him levelled:  
'What ails thee? not content with clattering jowl,  
Bocca, needs must thou bark? art thou bedevilled?'
- 109 'Thy tongue,' I cried, 'no more would I control,  
malignant traitor, and for shame to thee  
shall I bear back true tidings of thy soul.'
- 112 'Begone, and babble what thou wilt,' said he,  
'but, going hence, fail not discourse to hold  
of him who had the tongue just now so free.'

- 115 He is lamenting here the Frenchman's gold:  
    'I saw him of Duera,' canst thou note,  
    'there where the sinners lie out in the cold.'
- 118 And should they ask thee other anecdote,  
    him at thy side there name in thy reports,  
    the Beccheria,—for Florence cut his throat.
- 121 Gianni de' Soldanier, I think, consorts  
    with Ganelon, and Tribaldello yon  
    who while men slept unbarred Faenza's ports.
- 124 Already we away from him were gone  
    when, frozen in one hole, beheld I two  
    so that one head was hood to the other one:
- 127 And even as people bread for hunger chew,  
    the uppermost upon the one below  
    set teeth where brain and neck together grew.
- 130 Not otherwise once Tydeus gnawed the brow  
    of Menalippus, in his rage malign,  
    than skull and other parts gnawed this one now.
- 133 'O thou who shovest by so bestial sign  
    hatred to him whom thou devour'st,' said I,  
    'tell me the cause, upon this pledge of mine,
- 136 If thou complainest with good reason why,  
    that I, with both acquainted, and his guile,  
    may yet requite thee in the world on high,
- 139 If this my tongue be not dried up erewhile.'

## NOTES

*In the First Ring, Caina (Canto v. l. 107), are betrayers of kindred; in the Second, Antenora, traitors to country.*

Unlike other sinners, who so often and so touchingly show desire to be remembered, the traitors feel that to be recognized by Dante is to have their obloquy commemorated on earth. This is the last thing they desire. But Camicion de' Pazzi basely betrays the names of his neighbours in the ice and finally, to anticipate reprisal, reveals his own, adding that he is looking forward to the advent of a still living relative so much worse than himself as to make his own crime appear only a peccadillo. The whole moral of the *Inferno* is here. The essence of the torture of Hell consists in the perpetual recurrence of evil passion, that chronic inward plague which has been the death of the soul. For those who do not succumb to this canker of the soul, the perfect cure, as we shall see, is to be found in *Purgatory*.

I. 9. Such description calls for other art than that of him who speaks and understands as a child.

II. 26-30. Here in the original the cutting off of the final unaccented syllable of the lines (26, 28, 30) strikes the ear with a shock, as of collision. Lines 62, 64, 66, are another example. It is by no accident that two of the seven instances of this device found in the whole *Inferno* occur in a canto which begins as this one does with a wish for harsh and grating rimes. Cf. notes to xxviii. 32 and xxxi. 142. Tambernic and Pietrapana are tall rocky peaks.

II. 31-33. In the Italian harvest season when the overworked peasant-girl goes over the tasks of the day as she dreams through the short sultry night. This sudden plunge into mid-summer and back again makes the reader's teeth chatter too!

I. 57. This Albert, Count of Mangona, ruled the valley of the Bisenzio, a little northward of Florence. These sons, who rejoiced in the names of Napoleon and Alexander, killed each other quarrelling over the inheritance.

I. 61. According to the old French romance of Lancelot, when King Arthur's lance was pulled out of Mordred (or Mordrec), it left a hole through which passed a ray of sunlight, piercing the shadow of the traitor's body.

II. 68-9. After mentioning five traitors against kin—three, at least, Tuscan—he names himself, intimating that his still-living kinsman, Carlino, will commit a crime so great as to excuse his own. Carlino's traitorous surrender of a castle held

by his party (the Whites, Dante's party too) to the Blacks, in 1302, was to occasion the death of many fellow inmates. Of the other wretches referred to 'let us not speak of them, but look, and go'.

*l. 70.* At this point we pass from *Caina* into *Antenora*, so named from Antenor, who was supposed to have betrayed Troy, although of this neither Homer nor Virgil knows anything.

*ll. 76-123.* This is Bocca of the Abati, who, at the crucial moment of the battle of Montaperti, the most cruel defeat Florence suffered in the time of the Republic, cut off the hand of the Florentine standard-bearer. To this choice example of traitorhood Dante devotes more than forty dreadful lines.

*ll. 115-116.* Bribed by the French to betray Manfred. Cf. Canto xxviii, l. 16.

*ll. 118-23.* Ganelon is the notorious traitor of the *Chanson de Roland*. He of Beccheria, abbot of Vallombrosa, a Ghibelline of Pavian origin. His execution for alleged correspondence and collusion with Ghibelline exiles in 1258 brought about the excommunication of Florence and troubles with Pavia. Gianni of the Soldanieri was an unsuccessful leader of a *coup d'état* against his own party (Ghibelline) in the tumultuous year of Benevento (1266).

*l. 124.* Here begins the famous episode of Ugolino della Gherardesca and Archbishop Ruggieri. Ugolino was originally so great a Ghibelline that he could marry his eldest son to a grand-daughter of the great Emperor Frederic II. Turning Guelf and becoming governor of Pisa, he was overthrown by a mob headed by Ruggieri. Ugolino seems to be condemned to Antenora for treason to the Imperial cause; Ruggieri for treachery to him.

*l. 130.* The story of Tydeus and Menalippus, which doubtless suggested this gruesome situation to the Poet, is from the *Thebaid* of Statius, Bk. viii.

## CANTO XXXIII

*Antenora. Ugolino and his Children in the Tower*

- 1 That sinner listed from the soul repast  
    his mouth up, wiping it upon the hair  
    behind the head whereon I looked aghast;
- 4 Then he began: 'Thou wilt that I declare  
    desperate grief that wrings the heart of me,  
    even in the thought, before I lay it bare.
- 7 But if my words a seed of infamy  
    may sow unto the traitor whom I gnaw,  
    speaking and tears together shalt thou see.
- 10 I know not who thou art, nor by what law  
    thou comest down here; but a Florentine,  
    on hearing thee, it seemed to me I saw.
- 13 Thou hast to know I was Count Ugolin,  
    and this Archbishop Roger: why so fell  
    a neighbour am I, let me tell his sin.
- 16 That I, in his good faith confiding well,  
    by his devices was in prison flung  
    and done to death, there is no need to tell.
- 19 But what thou hast not heard from any tongue,  
    that is, the cruel death he put me to,  
    shalt hear, and learn if he have done me wrong.
- 22 A narrow aperture within the mew  
    which holds the name of Hunger because of this  
    offence,—and others must be shut there too,—
- 25 Had shown me already through its orifice  
    many a moon, when came the ill dream to me  
    that rent the veil of future destinies.
- 28 This man seemed master of the hounds to be,  
    chasing the wolf and wolslings to the mount  
    wherethrough the Pisans cannot Lucca see.
- 31 With eager sleuthhounds gaunt and trained to hunt,  
    had he Gualandi on before him sent,  
    Sismondi with Lanfranchi, to the front.
- 34 After brief coursing, sire and sons forspent  
    appeared to me, and all the while they fled  
    I saw their flanks with whetted tushes rent.

- 37 When I awoke before the dawn was red,  
     I heard my children moaning in their sleep,  
     for they were with me, and imploring bread.
- 40 Right cruel must thou be if thou canst keep  
     the tears back, thinking what my bodings were,  
     and if thou weep not now, when wouldest thou weep?
- 43 The wonted hour to bring our food drew near,  
     and all by this were from their slumber stirred,  
     and each one from his dream was full of fear:
- 46 When, sounding through the horrible tower, I heard  
     one nailing up the doorway of the mew:  
     so gazed I at my sons without a word.
- 49 I wept not, so of stone within I grew:  
     they wept; and Anselm, darling little one,  
     said: "How now, father, art thou ailing too?"
- 52 Nor yet for this I wept, made answer none  
     throughout that day and all the following night,  
     till dawned upon the world another sun.
- 55 Soon as a slender ray of feeble light  
     entered the dreary prison, to disclose  
     my looks reflected in four faces white,
- 58 I bit both hands for anguish. Thereat those,  
     supposing that I did it for desire  
     of breaking fast, with one accord uprose
- 61 And said: "Father, our pain were far less dire  
     if thou wouldest eat of us: from thee we got  
     these wretched bodies,—take them from us, sire."
- 64 I calmed me then, lest they be more distraught:  
     through that day and the next all mute were we:  
     ah, cruel earth, why didst thou open not?
- 67 On the fourth day, when dawn broke dimly,  
     fell Gaddo at my feet, and I must brook  
     hearing: "O father, hast no help for me?"
- 70 There died he; and as thou on me d'ost look,  
     I looked and saw them falling, falling through  
     the fifth day and the sixth: whence I betook
- 73 Myself, now blind, to groping, and for two  
     whole days called to them, after they were gone:  
     then hunger did what sorrow could not do."

- 76 Having said this, with eyes askance drawn down,  
     that miserable skull he grappled dumb,  
     with teeth strong as a dog's upon the bone.
- 79 Ah, Pisa! of the folk opprobrium  
     in the fair country where the *si* doth sound,  
     since neighbours lag in punishment, let come
- 82 Caprara and Gorgona, shifting ground,  
     and choke up Arno's channel, quite across,  
     that every living soul in thee be drowned.
- 85 For if folk tax Count Ugolin with loss,  
     by treachery to thee, of places strong,  
     shouldst not have put his sons on such a cross.
- 88 Thou modern Thebes! their youth made free from  
     Uguccion and Brigata, and withal [wrong]  
     the two already mentioned in my song.
- 91 Yet onward went we, where the icy pall,  
     rough swathing, doth another people keep,  
     not downward bended, but reverted all.
- 94 The very weeping there forbids them weep,  
     and finding on the eyes a barrier, woe  
     turns inward to make agony more deep:
- 97 Because the first tears to a cluster grow,  
     and, like a visor crystalline, upfill  
     the whole concavity beneath the brow.
- 100 And though, as in a callus, through the chill  
     prevailing there, all sensibility  
     had ceased its function in my visage, still
- 103 I felt some wind, so now it seemed to me:  
     ‘Master, who moveth this?’ I therefore said,  
     ‘is not all vapour quenched down here?’ Whence he:
- 106 ‘Speedily art thou thither to be led  
     where shall thine eye to this an answer find,  
     seeing the cause wherefrom the blast is shed.’
- 109 And of the wretches of the frozen rind  
     one shouted to us: ‘O ye souls so fell  
     that the last station is to you assigned,
- 112 Lift from my visage up each rigid veil,  
     that I may vent the sorrow in a trice,  
     which swells my bosom, ere the tears congeal.’

- 115 'Tell who thou art,' I said, 'I ask this price:  
     if thee therefore I do not extricate,  
         may I go to the bottom of the ice.'
- 118 And he: 'Frà Alberigo I of late,  
     he of the fruit of the ill garden: so  
         I here am getting for my fig a date.'
- 121 'Already,' said I, 'art thou here below?'  
     And he made answer: 'How my flesh may thrive  
         there in the upper world, I do not know.'
- 124 This Ptolomea hath such prerogative  
     that oftentimes the soul falls to this place  
         ere ever Atropos the signal give.
- 127 And that more willingly from off my face  
     thou now remove away the glazen tears,  
         know that as soon as any soul betrays,
- 130 As I betrayed, forthwith a fiend appears  
     and takes her body, therein governing  
         throughout the revolution of her years.
- 133 Headlong to such a cistern doth she sling;  
     and haply still above the trunk is shown  
         of yonder shade behind me wintering.
- 136 To thee, if just come down, he should be known:  
     Ser Branca d'Oria: and many a year  
         since he was thus locked up, is come and gone.'
- 139 'I think,' said I, 'that thou deceiv'st me here:  
     for Branca d'Oria not yet is dead,  
         but eats and drinks and sleeps and dons his gear.'
- 142 'Into the moat of Maltalons,' he said,  
     'up there where boils the sticky pitch away,  
         had Michael Zanchë's spirit not yet sped,
- 145 When this one left a devil in full sway  
     in his own body, and one next of blood  
         who served him as accomplice to betray.'
- 148 But now reach here thy hand, as understood,  
     open mine eyes': my hand I reached not forth,  
         and courtesy it was to be thus rude.
- 151 Ah, men of Genoa, strangers to all worth  
     and full of all depravity accurst,  
         why have ye not been scattered from the earth?'

- 154 For, with that spirit of Romagna worst,  
one such of you I for his dealing found,  
whose soul is in Cocytus now immersed,  
157 Yet seems he alive in body above ground.

## NOTES

*ll. 1-78.* Francesco De Sanctis, in his *Storia della Letteratura*, makes a celebrated comment upon this episode. Ugolino is attached to Ruggieri by hate as Francesca by love to Paolo. In both cases the betrayed one is the only speaker. Nothing is said, except by implication, of the crime of Ugolino; the indignation that makes the verse is all against the archbishop. This is an ideal case of retribution (*il contrappasso*). The betrayed one, who was murdered by starvation, feeds his undying revenge by for ever gnawing the skull of the traitor, and so doing is executor of Divine Justice.

*ll. 32-3.* Three powerful families of Pisan nobility, friends and allies of the archbishop.

*l. 80.* Italian was the 'lingua di sì' (language, originally, of 'sic' for 'yes') just as Provençal was the 'langue d'oc' ('hoc' for 'yes'), whence the name of the great region of Languedoc.

*l. 82.* Caprara and Gorgona, islands off the mouth of Arno. Looking down the river from the Leaning Tower on a clear day, one seems to see them lying across the outlet.

*l. 91.* Ptolomea, third Ring of Cocytus, named from the Ptolemaeus who slew Simon Maccabaeus and his sons at a banquet (1 Maccabees xvi). Here betrayers of guests shed icy tears.

*ll. 118-151.* This gentleman to whom Dante had, by an ambiguous oath, promised a courtesy, had murdered two of his kin at his dinner table, the signal to the assassins being: 'Bring in the fruit!' Obviously Dante here acts in harmony with what he conceives to be the Divine Justice. Let the betrayer feel in his own person what treachery is like! Matter-of-fact critics, forgetting the symbolism, gravely censure the Poet, as if this had been an action committed in our world by the man Dante!

*l. 137.* Of the most distinguished family of Genoa. He had murdered his father-in-law, Michael Zanchë, whom we heard of among the barrators (Canto xxii, l. 88). Apparently the body of Ser Branca continued to go through the motions of life on earth until Dante himself ceased to be met with down here. Our Poet seems to have felt that he bore the keys of Hell and Heaven!

## CANTO XXXIV

*Ninth Circle: Judecca. Passage from Lucifer to the Light*

- 1 'Tow'rd us the banner of the King of Hell  
advances; therefore forward bend thine eyes,'  
my Master said, 'if thou discernest well.'
- 4 As, when thick fog upon the landscape lies,  
or when the night darkens our hemisphere,  
a turning windmill seems afar to rise,
- 7 Such edifice, methought, did now appear:  
whereat, by reason of the wind, I cling  
behind my Guide,—no other shelter near.
- 10 Already (and it is with fear I sing)  
I found me where the shades all covered show  
like straws through crystal faintly glimmering.
- 13 Some stand erect, others are prone below;  
one here head up, soles uppermost one there;  
another face to foot bent, like a bow.
- 16 When we had made our way along to where  
I was to see, as pleased my Master good,  
the Being that once bore the semblance fair,
- 19 He halted me, and from before me stood,  
saying: 'Lo! Dis, and lo! the place of blame  
where thou must weapon thee with fortitude.'
- 22 How frozen and how saint I now became,  
ask me not, Reader, for it balks my pen,  
all language would fall short of such an aim.
- 25 I did not die, nor living was I then:  
think now, if thou hast any wit therefor,  
what thing, bereft of both, did I remain.
- 28 He, of the woeful realm the Emperor,  
emerged midbreast above the ice-field yon,  
and liker to a giant I, than bore
- 31 The giants with his arms comparison:  
consider, with respect to such a limb,  
how huge that whole which it depends upon.
- 34 If he were fair once, as he now is grim,  
and raised his brow against That One who made,  
well may all woe have fountainhead in him.

- 37 O what a wonder, when upon his head  
 three faces to my sight were manifest!  
 the one in front, and it was fiery red;
- 40 The other two with this one coalesced  
 just o'er the middle of each shoulder, while  
 they all conjoined together at the crest:
- 43 The right-hand face appeared to reconcile  
 with yellow, white; the left was such of hue  
 as folk who come whence floweth down the Nile.
- 46 Vast wings came forth, beneath each visage two,  
 such as were fitting to a bird like that:  
 sails of the sea so broad I never knew.
- 49 They bore no feathers, but as of a bat  
 their fashion was; and flapping them he stood  
 so that three winds proceeded forth thereat,
- 52 Whence frozen over was Cocytus' flood.  
 The cadent tears were trickling from six eyes  
 over three chins, to mix with drooling blood.
- 55 At every mouth his tushes heckle-wise  
 upon a malefactor champ and tear,  
 so that he thus makes three to agonize.
- 58 To him in front the bite could not compare  
 unto the clawing, for at times the hide  
 dilacerated, left the shoulders bare.
- 61 'That soul up yon, most sorely crucified,  
 is Judas the Iscariot,' said my Lord,  
 'his head within, he plies his legs outside.'
- 64 Of the other two, whose heads are netherward,  
 Brutus it is who hangs from the black jowl:  
 look how he writhes and utters not a word!
- 67 The other Cassius, stalwart-seeming soul.  
 But now another night is darkening;  
 we must depart: for we have seen the whole.'
- 70 About his neck I, at his bidding, cling:  
 and he of time and place advantage takes:  
 and soon as wing is wide apart from wing,
- 73 Lays hold upon the shaggy flanks, and makes  
 his way from shag to shag, descending by  
 the matted hair among the frozen cakes.

- 76 When we were come to that point where the thigh  
revolves, exactly where the haunches swell,  
my guide, with effort and distressful sigh,
- 79 Turned round his head to where his footing fell,  
and like one mounting, grappled to the hair,  
so that, methought, we back returned to Hell.
- 82 'Keep fast thy hold, because by such a stair,'  
the Master said, panting like one forsaken,  
'forsaking so great evil, must we fare.'
- 85 Out through the crevice of a rock he went,  
and set me on its brink; then warily  
planting his feet, his steps toward me bent.
- 88 I lifted up mine eyes, thinking to see  
Lucifer, just as I had seen him last,  
and saw him with his legs upturned to me.
- 91 And what perplexity now held me fast,  
let dullards fancy who have notion none  
what point it was I had already passed.
- 94 'Rise up', the Master said, 'thy feet upon:  
the way is long, and difficult the road,  
and now to middle tierce returns the sun.'
- 97 It was no palace chamber where we stood,  
rather a natural dungeon vault was this,  
wanting in light and without footing good.
- 100 'Before I pluck myself from the Abyss,  
Master,' when risen to my feet I said,  
'talk with me somewhat, lest I judge amiss.'
- 103 Where is the ice? and how is This One stayed  
thus upside down and how, in moments few,  
the sun from even to morning transit made?
- 106 'Thou still believest thee', he said thereto,  
'yon-side the Centre, where I gripped the hair  
of the fell Worm that pierces the world through.'
- 109 So long as I descended wast thou there:  
soon as I turned, the point we overran  
whereto all weights from all directions bear:
- 112 Thou'rt come beneath the hemisphere whose span  
is counterposed to that which doth embrace  
the great dry land, beneath whose cope the Man

- 115 Was slain, pure born and without need of grace:  
thy feet upon a little disk abide  
that for Judecca forms the counter face.
- 118 Here it is morn when yonder eventide:  
and still doth This One stand as fixedly  
as ere he made a ladder with his hide.
- 121 Down out of Heaven upon this side dropped he,  
and all the land that here of yore arose  
was veiled, through terror of him, with the sea,
- 124 And joined our hemisphere; and some suppose  
perhaps that land to-day on this side found  
fled up from him, and left this empty close.'
- 127 There is a place below, whose further bound  
from Beelzebub far as his tomb extends,  
by sight unnoted, but betrayed by sound
- 130 Made by a rivulet that here descends  
a crannied rock, which it has gnawed away  
with gently sloping current, as it wends.
- 133 My Guide and I upon that hidden way  
entered, returning to the world of light:  
and without caring for repose to stay,
- 136 He first, and I behind him, scaled the height,  
till a round opening revealed afar      {bright:  
the beauteous things wherewith the heavens are
- 139 Thence came we forth to re-behold each star.

## NOTES

*Betrayers of lords and benefactors.  
'Vexilla Regis prodeunt inferni.'*

I. 1. Virgil parodies (in Latin of course) an ancient hymn: 'Vexilla Regis prodeunt Fulget crucis mysterium.' Since Dante rhymes Latin with Italian, the translator must either sacrifice the rhyme or the Latin. It has seemed best, in general, to translate *everything* into English.

I. 38. The three faces of the Author of evil are doubtless designed as an awful parody of the Divine Trinity, the vision of which Dante describes at the very close of the Poem.

II. 61-7. 'Dante consistently regards Julius Caesar as the first of the Roman Emperors . . . and it is as traitorous to Caesar, representative of the highest civil authority, that he condemns Brutus and Cassius to the lowest pit of Hell, along with Judas, the betrayer of the representative of the highest spiritual authority.'—Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary*, s.v. Cesare.

I. 92. Possibly some who are not dullards may be willing to be told that the Point in question was the Centre of the Earth, so that we are now under the southern hemisphere. Purgatory, toward which we are climbing, being opposite Jerusalem, we have gained twelve hours of time. It would now be Saturday morning again, so that twenty-four hours are allowed for the passage from the Centre to the foot of the mountain of Purgatory. If we can do it at all, we ought to be able to do it in that time, for we are not, as in descending, to make a thousand stops by the way.

II. 112-17. Dante's feet are planted on a disk opposite that of the Judecca, so that he is now beneath the point in the southern hemisphere opposite the place of the Crucifixion.

II. 121-26. 'The land of the southern hemisphere shrank away from Satan as he fell, and, after he was planted in the Centre, the ground forming the island and mountain of Purgatory fled up from him, leaving that passage open.'

II. 127-36. Beelzebub for Satan; his tomb is Hell; the upper part of his enormous bulk projects into Cocytus, the legs into this passage, which extends 'as far as his tomb', but in the opposite direction—that is, it leads, as described, to the surface of the Earth, to which the Poets now make the difficult but uneventful ascent.

I. 139. Each Cantica closes with the word 'stelle', stars. This obstinate English rhyme cannot always manage to the letter.

# PURGATORIO

*'E quant' uom più va su, e men fa male'*

Purgatorio iv. 90

## CANTO I

*The Dawn of Easter*

- 1 Sets sail the little vessel of my mind  
     and henceforth better waters furrowing  
     leaves such a cruel ocean far behind.
- 4 And of that Second Kingdom will I sing  
     wherein the human spirit, purged of stain,  
     grows worthy to ascend on heavenward wing.
- 7 Here let dead poesy arise again,  
     O holy Muses, since I am your own,  
     and here Calliope uplift her strain,
- 10 Companioning my singing with that tone  
     whence the poor Magpies felt so stricken through  
     that they were desperate of pardon grown.
- 13 The tender oriental sapphire hue  
     suffusing the calm heaven from midmost height  
     to the first circle down, so pure and blue,
- 16 Cheered up mine eyes with long-unfelt delight  
     soon as I issued forth from the dead blur  
     that had afflicted both my heart and sight.
- 19 The planet fair that is Love's comforter  
     lit with her smiling all the eastern skies,  
     veiling the Fishes then escorting her.
- 22 Turning toward the right, I fixed mine eyes  
     on the other pole, thereby four stars discerning,  
     ne'er seen by man save first in Paradise.
- 25 The heaven appeared enraptured with their burning:  
     clime of the northland, O how widowed thou,  
     since these have been withholden from thy yearning!
- 28 When from their view I could avert my brow,  
     glancing a little toward the north, that shone  
     where the bright Wain had sunk from sight ere now,
- 31 Near me appeared an elder all alone,  
     worthy of so great reverence by his mien  
     that more to father owes not any son.
- 34 Long was his beard, with grizzled streaks between,  
     and like thereto the crown of hair he wore  
     fell to his breast in double tresses sheen.

- 37 Beams of the holy luminaries four  
     adorned his face and so great lustre shed,  
     I saw him as though the sun had been before.
- 40 'Who are ye, against the darkling river fled  
     from out the eternal prison void of day?'  
     moving those venerable plumes, he said.
- 43 'Who was your lantern or who led the way  
     issuing forth from the abysmal gloom  
     that makes the infernal valley black for aye?
- 46 Are broken thus below the laws of doom?  
     or has in Heaven gone forth some new decree  
     that ye, being damned, to my rock-caverns come?'
- 49 Straightway my Leader laid his hold on me,  
     and with word, hand, and signal, to position  
     of reverence compelled my brow and knee;
- 52 Then answered: 'I came not of my own volition:  
     a Lady made descent from the Divine,  
     and I assist this man at her petition.'
- 55 But since it is thy will that I assign  
     more reason for our veritable plight,  
     my will cannot be at variance with thine.
- 58 This man has never seen his final night,  
     but by his folly had come near it, so  
     that little time was left to turn aright.
- 61 I was sent to him, as I let thee know,  
     for his redemption, and there was no road  
     save this whercon I set myself to go.
- 64 I have shown him all the bad and their abode;  
     and now intend to show him the array  
     of spirits who are purged beneath thy code.
- 67 How I have brought him would be long to say:  
     from up aloft comes virtue adjuvant,  
     to give him sight and speech of thee to-day.
- 70 Please to his coming now thy favour grant:  
     he goes in quest of Freedom, boon how dear  
     knows that man who for her his life doth scant.
- 73 Thou knowest it, for death did not appear  
     bitter to thee in Utica, vacating  
     the vesture that great day to be so clear.

- 76 No eternal edicts are we violating:  
for this man lives, and Minos binds me not,  
but I am of the circle where are waiting
- 79 Marcia's pure eyes, which still with prayer seem fraught  
that thou wouldest hold her thine, O holy breast!  
then grace us, if her love be unforgot.
- 82 Let us throughout thy seven kingdoms quest:  
thee by report to her will I requite,  
if word of thee below thou sanctionest.'
- 85 'Marcia was aye so winsome in my sight  
long as I tarried yonder,' he replied,  
'that doing all her will was my delight.
- 88 Now can she, from beyond the baleful tide,  
move me no more, by law which took effect  
when I passed over from the further side.
- 91 But if a Lady of Heaven prompt and direct,  
as thou hast said, thy bland persuasion hush:  
sufficient answer for her sake expect.
- 94 Go then and see that with a simple rush  
thou gird this mortal, washing in such wise  
his face that for no soilure it may blush:
- 97 For it were unbecoming that with eyes  
beclouded, he appear before the Prime  
Angel who is of those of Paradise.
- 100 This islet, ere the slope begins to climb,  
about the margin where the billow heaves,  
is fringed with rushes in the oozy slime.
- 103 No other plant, of such as put forth leaves  
or harden, could survive there, since not bent  
to every buffet that the stalk receives.
- 106 Put all returning here from your intent;  
the sun, now rising, will instruct you how  
to take the Mount by easier gradient.'
- 109 So vanished he; and I, uprising now  
without a word, and firmly taking stand  
close to my Leader, bent on him my brow.
- 112 'Follow my footsteps, son,' was his command,  
'let us turn backward, for from here this lea  
slopes to the lower limit of the land.'

- 196                  *Cleansing and Girding of Dante*
- 115 Now did the shadowy hour of morning flee  
before the dawn, so that from far away  
I caught the gusty ripple of the sea.
- 118 We walked the lonely plain as wander they  
who turn back to the pathway lost, and who  
until they find it seem to go astray.
- 121 When we had reached that region low where dew  
contends with sun, nor in the chilly air  
disperses while the beams are faint and few,
- 124 Softly upon the tender herbage there  
both of his outspread palms my Master placed;  
whence I, who of his purpose was aware,
- 127 Lifted my grimy cheeks, with tear-stains laced;  
there to my features he restored that hue  
which by the spume of Hell had been effaced.
- 130 Then to the lonely seashore came we two,  
which never yet upon its waters found  
one mariner who afterward withdrew.
- 133 Here as that other bade, he girt me round:  
O miracle! that such as from the earth  
he culled the humble plant, quick from the ground
- 136 Whence it was plucked, it came again to birth.

## NOTES

**Scene:** *An island in the Southern Ocean, at foot of a loftier Teneriffe.*

**Time:** *The action begins before dawn Easter Sunday, A.D. 1500.*

**Characters:** *All, save the pilgrim-poet, shades of the dead.*

*Virgil and Dante appear on the plain sloping from sea-shore to mountain-cliff.*

*I. 7.* Poesy is spoken of as dead hitherto because relating to the spiritually dead: so the words are generally understood. But does not poesy really die in the final Canto of the *Inferno*? It certainly seems benumbed with the chill of Cocytus, and the Satan of Dante is by no means a lofty or heroic figure like Satan in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. We must, however, beware of making our definition of poetry too narrow: it is enough to say that, while *Inferno* xxxiii and *Purgatorio* i are great and noble poetry, *Inferno* xxxiv is in places grotesque, in other places studiously plain.

*I. 11.* The Magpies are the transformed princesses (the Pierides) who had presumed to vie with the Muses in song.

*I. 15.* The first circle is that of the horizon.

*II. 19-21.* The sun being in Aries (Ram) the morning-star (Venus) is in the sign of Pisces. Medieval artists, picturing the Creation, showed Venus among the stars of that constellation. Since the English word 'comfort' has fallen from its high estate and its noun is making the tour of the world as 'le confort', it may be well to remind the reader of the original noble sense the word bore. Dante's line is: 'Lo bel pianeta che ad amar conforta': the fair planet whose influence makes strong to love.

*I. 23.* As he is facing toward the dawn-star, the four symbolic stars are near the South Pole. These 'sacred stars', which appear again in Canto xxxi, probably symbolize the four pagan or cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. Dante had doubtless heard of the Southern Cross, but, having no authentic information about the world south of the terrestrial equator, was happily free to give play to imagination.

*I. 31.* The shade of Cato of Utica, warden of this region outside of Purgatory. Examples of other just pagans, who appear among the redeemed, are given in *Paradiso* xx. These examples are especially interesting as showing how the tender Poet strove to soften the harshness of dogma.

*l.* 58. Norton, whose renderings are almost always meticulously close to the literal meaning, here renders *non vide mai* by the words *has not yet seen*, evidently understanding the reference as to Dante's physical death. But the context surely shows that not the death of the body but that of the soul is meant. It was not physical death that his folly put him in peril of, and it was to escape far other peril that the mystic journey was undertaken. This is not the only case in which the rime is faithful not only to the spirit but to the very letter of the significant word of the terse Poet.

*l.* 89. The law is that in Heaven 'there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage'. Cato being one of the blest and Marcia on the wrong side of Acheron, she has become to him as a stranger. However one may judge this sentiment, Cato remains true to the type of the Roman of inflexible austerity. Dante puts into the mouth of Virgil such an allusion to Cato's suicide (71-5) as proves that the act is interpreted as a sublime sacrifice for freedom.

*ll.* 94-6. Symbolic cleansing and girding of Dante. The reed is symbol of humility: Dante's besetting sin, as we shall see, is pride.

*ll.* 115-17. Impossible to render the enchanting ripple of the magical verse, 'Conobbi il tremolar de la marina'. There is some dispute as to whether the Poet wrote *ora* (hour), or *awa* (*bra*, breeze); but it is difficult to suppose that he conceived of the morning breeze, which blows off shore, as fleeing from, or in front of, the dawn. What is emphasized is the sudden imperceptible emergence of the light. The reading I follow is that of the Italian Dante Society in its critical text, of Torracca, of Passerini in his monumental edition, and others, including that nice translator, C. E. Norton. The Oxford text reads *bra*.

*l.* 132. Cf. the fate of Ulysses, *Inferno* xxvi.

## CANTO II

*The Angel Pilot*

- 1 The sun by now to that horizon came  
     the arc of whose meridian is at height  
     just at the point above Jerusalem:
- 4 And, circling opposite to him, the Night  
     was issuing forth from Ganges with the Scales  
     which fail her hand when she exceeds in might;
- 7 So, where I was, the cheek that glows and pales  
     of fair Aurora, sallowed with the ray  
     of orange, because age on her prevails.
- 10 Beside the sea we pondered on the way  
     like folk who, lingering still along the shore,  
     hasten in heart and in the body stay;
- 13 And as, a little while the dawn before,  
     Mars reddens through the vapour baleful-bright  
     low in the west above the ocean-floor,
- 16 I saw,—O may it bless again my sight!—  
     a lustre coming on across the main  
     with speed unparalleled by any flight.
- 19 And when I let mine eye awhile remain  
     detached from it, to question of my Guide,  
     larger and brighter now it showed again.
- 22 Then there emerged to view on either side  
     a whiteness indistinct, and down below  
     little by little another I descried.
- 25 My Master uttered not a word, till lo!  
     the first white spots appeared as wings to shine,  
     then, when he surely did the Pilot know,
- 28 He cried: 'Make haste, make haste, the knee incline,  
     fold hands,—it is God's Angel! thou shalt use  
     henceforth to see such ministers divine.'
- 31 Look, how doth he all human means refuse,  
     scorning device of sail or oar, nor drew  
     aught but his wings upon so far a cruise;
- 34 Look, look how heavenward he holds them true,  
     fanning the welkin with those plumes eterne  
     which do not moult as mortal feathers do!'

- 37 Then, near and nearer come, might I discern  
     the Bird of God more dazzling than before,  
     until mine eyes that with the blaze now burn
- 40 Fall down undone. But he drew near the shore  
     on pinnace light and rapid,—such an one  
     the water swallowed nothing of the prore.
- 43 Astern the Pilot stood, with benison  
     of Heaven inscribed upon his face devout:  
     a hundred and more spirits sat thereon.
- 46 'When Israel from Egypt issued out,'  
     they chanted as with single voice the lay,  
     with what there afterward the Psalmist wrote.
- 49 When sign of holy cross he made them, they  
     flung themselves one and all upon the strand,  
     and swiftly as he came he swept away.
- 52 There huddled they together close at hand  
     gazing about, like strangers to the place  
     endeavouring new things to understand.
- 55 The sun was shooting everywhere his rays,  
     and with the arrows of his radiance now  
     did Capricorn from middle-heaven chase,
- 58 When the new people lifted up their brow  
     toward us, saying: 'If expert ye be  
         in faring up the Mountain, show us how.'
- 61 And Virgil said: 'Ye deem perchance that we  
     have knowledge of the place where now we stray,  
     but we are also pilgrims as are ye.'
- 64 We came short while before you, by a way  
     so rough and difficult that the ascent  
     henceforward will appear to us but play.'
- 67 The spirits, among whom the whisper went  
     that I was still a living and breathing one,  
     turned deadly pale for very wonderment.
- 70 And as, to hear good tidings, people run  
     to reach the olive-bearing messenger,  
     and not a man appears the throng to shun,
- 73 So one and all the happy spirits there  
     fastened upon me hungrily their view,  
     as if forgot the quest to make them fair.

- 76 And I saw one of them who forward drew  
to my embrace with love so manifest  
that I was influenced the like to do.
- 79 O insubstantial souls in shadowy vest!  
thrice did I clasp my hands behind that shade  
and drew them back as often to my breast.
- 82 Wonder, I think, was on my face portrayed;  
whereat it only smiled and drew away  
while I pursued in hopes it would have stayed.
- 85 In mellow tones he gently said me nay,  
and knowing him thereby, did I implore  
that he for speech a little while would stay.
- 88 'As loved I in the mortal flesh of yore,  
so loosed I love thee still,' he answered clear,  
'I stay then; but why pacest thou the shore?'
- 91 'To this place where we are, Casella dear,  
to come once more I make this pilgrimage;  
but why is so much time bereft thee here?'
- 94 And he: 'No injury can I allege,  
if he who takes up when and whom he please  
somewhile denied to me the ferriage,
- 97 For of right will his own is made. Yet these  
three happy months accepts he verily  
whoever longs to enter, with all peace;
- 100 Whence I, who had just now betaken me  
where Tiber water savours of the brine,  
have been received by him benignantly.
- 103 That is the goal where now his wings incline;  
for at that outlet ever gathers what  
falls not perdue to punishment condign.'
- 106 And I: 'If novel law abolish not  
practice or memory of the song of love  
that used to solace all my yearning thought,
- 109 I pray thee grace me with the comfort of  
thy song, for in the body travelling  
so far, my heart is weary here above.'
- 112 'Love, deep within the spirit reasoning,'  
so sweetly he began to sing it thus  
that still the dulcet tones within me ring.

- 115 My Master and I and that unanimous  
company with him drew such rapture thence  
as if no other care encumbered us.
- 118 Still hung we on that music in suspense,  
when lo! that stately Elder: 'Laggard crew  
of spirits, what portends this negligence?
- 121 Think what, delaying, ye neglect to do!  
speed to the Mount to slough the film,' he cried,  
'that lets not God be manifest to you.'
- 124 As pigeons that are feeding side by side  
and pecking at the darnel or the ear,  
quiet and strutting not with wonted pride,
- 127 If aught whereof they are afraid appear  
all of a sudden let alone their food  
because of being assailed by greater care,
- 130 So saw I that newly-landed multitude  
forsake the song and scurry tow'rd the height  
like them who go but wot not where they would.
- 133 Nor any less precipitate our flight.

## NOTES

*Contrast the opening of Inferno ii.*

The sun is rising here at Purgatory, night is falling at Jerusalem, it is midnight on the Ganges. For another great astronomical image to designate the time, cf. the beginning of Canto xxii.

ll. 1-8. As the sun is with Aries, night, being opposite, is with Libra. Night is conceived as a female figure carrying the scales which fall from her hand when she exceeds: that is, at the autumnal equinox when the sun enters Libra and the night becomes longer than the day. Now, returning from this great flight of imagination to where we stand on the shore of this isle of the southern ocean, we see Aurora's cheeks changing from pearl to saffron as she swiftly ages. If this note seems insufficient, see Dr. E. Moore's essay on the *Astronomy of Dante*, or the note in Grandgent's useful edition of the *Purgatorio*. This passage it may be which fired Milton's imagination to one of its noblest flights:

'... from eastern point  
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears  
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas  
Beyond the horizon.' (P. L. iii. 557-60.)

l. 46. *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*. Psalm 114. This passage refers, says Dante, by allegory to Redemption, morally to Conversion, anagogically to the departure from earthly slavery to eternal freedom. Cf. letter to Can Grande, Sec. 7.

ll. 55-7. The Ram being with the sun on the horizon, the Skygoat will be in the zenith. This is a good example of the native terseness of Dante in the idiom of the Greek myth.

ll. 70-5. 'Friends flocking round', as on the occasion of 'good news from Ghent to Aix'—a modern instance in Dante's day, when a galloping horse or a human runner relayed tidings good or bad from town to town.

l. 91. Of his friend Casella, whom Dante met 'in the milder shades of Purgatory', little is known more than what the Poet here tells.

l. 98. Three months since Christmas when the Jubilee Year of peace and pardon had begun.

l. 101. The Isola Sacra at Tiber mouth seems to typify the Church, islanded amid the tumults and corruption of the human world. The happy souls, then, are ferried by the angel from island to island!

I. 112. The first line of that canzone which Dante analyses in his *Concilio*, Third Treatise.

Beginning with the disappearance of Cato (i. 109), the close of the first Canto and the whole of the second constitute a complete symphonic composition, in sweet and tender contrast with the crashing discords of the latter Cantos of the *Inferno*. Here is set the key of the *Purgatorio*, the note of which is the serenity of blessed hope. The first chords of the allegro sweep over us with the quick coming of dawn, revealing the level expanse of water ruffled by the off-shore breeze. Then in soft and solemn chords the washing of the stains of Hell from the cheeks of the Pilgrim of Eternity and the girding with the reed of humility plucked from the lonely shore. At the beginning of Canto ii, in deep andante the majestic spectacle of the heavens, followed by the equally sublime emergence of the bright Bird of God, piloting the expectant souls from Tiber mouth. Now melting notes, conveying the helpless feeling of the stranger in a strange land, are interrupted by the intense surprise of the spirits on meeting a breathing man and the dramatic recognition of Dante by Casella. The pathetic tenor notes of his lovely aria are too soon interrupted by the harsh bass of stern Cato, when the whole is resolved in scurry and whir of swiftly fleeting wings, as of an affrighted flock of doves. What composer ever had a nobler theme?

## CANTO III

*Ante-Purgatory*

- 1 While sudden flight was all dispersing thus  
    that flock of spirits through the countryside  
        toward the Mount where reason searches us,
- 4 I drew up close to my Companion tried;  
    and how without him had I kept the course?  
        who up the mountain would have been my guide?
- 7 He seemed to me disturbed with self-remorse:  
    O soul of honour, tender conscience good,  
        how little fault to have such bitter force!
- 10 After his feet the hurry had subdued,  
    that of all action mars the dignity,  
        my mind, which hitherto in durance stood,
- 13 Eagerly rendered its attention free:  
    then set my face toward the Hill, supreme  
        of peaks emerging skyward from the sea.
- 16 Behind us flamed the sun, whose ruddy gleam  
    before me broke in the configuration  
        formed of me by the stoppage of its beam.
- 19 I turned, in terror of abandonment  
    sidewise and half around, become aware  
        the ground was shadowed only where I went.
- 22 Then turning round to me, my Comforter  
    began: 'Why givest thou suspicion room?  
        dost thou not think I, guiding, with thee fare?
- 25 Already it is evening at the tomb  
    where lies the body of me that cast a shade:  
        Naples received it from Brundusium.
- 28 Now if no shadow is before me made,  
    like wonder in the heavens dost thou behold,  
        whose rays are not by one another stayed.
- 31 The Power who will his workings not unfold  
    makes bodies apt to suffer, as we do,  
        torments arising both from heat and cold.
- 34 One Substance, in Three Persons, travels through  
    illimitable ways, where it were wild  
        to deem that human reason might pursue.

- 37 Be to the fact, O mortals, reconciled,  
     for, had ye power to see all things and learn,  
         no need had been for Mary to bear child.
- 40 And ye have seen without fulfilment yearn  
     those whose desire would have been satisfied,  
         which now is given to them for grief eterne.
- 43 Of Aristotle and Plato I speak,—beside  
     many another.' Here his brow he bent,  
         deeply perturbed, and further speech denied.
- 46 Meanwhile toward the mountain-foot we went:  
     a cliff so steep that nimble legs would be  
         of small avail attempting such ascent.
- 49 The way between Turbia and Lerici  
     most lonely and deserted were a stair,  
         compared with that, accessible and free.
- 52 'Where slopes the mountain, who can tell me where,'  
     the Master murmured, staying his advance,  
         'so that the wingless foot may clamber there?'
- 55 And while he, casting down his countenance,  
     was questioning his mind about the road,  
         and up along the rock I ran my glance,
- 58 Off to the left a flock of spirits showed  
     moving their feet our way, though otherwise  
         appearing, so deliberate their mode.
- 61 'Look, Master,' I exclaimed, 'lift up thine eyes:  
     some who will put us right are coming yon,  
         if thou canst find within thee no device.'
- 64 He looked, and said, with confidence re-won:  
     'Go we to meet them, for their steps are slow,  
         and do thou keep good hope, beloved son.'
- 67 We moved along a thousand steps or so,  
     finding that company as far by this  
         as a good thrower with his hand could throw.
- 70 When at the foot of the high precipice  
     gathered they all, compact and circumspect,  
         gazing like men who fear to go amiss.
- 73 'O ye who ended well, O souls elect!'  
     Virgil began, 'in name of that sublime  
         peace which, I think, ye one and all expect,

- 76 Tell us if it be possible to climb  
     the Mountain somewhere by a slope less bold:  
     for irksome to the wise is loss of time.'
- 79 As sheep are wont to issue from the fold  
     by one and two and three, the rest pursue  
     meekly, and eye and muzzle downward hold,
- 82 And what the first one does the others do,  
     and if she stop all huddle at her side,  
     nor question why, the quiet silly crew:
- 85 So moving now toward us I descried  
     the column-leaders of that happy flock,  
     modest in face, in action dignified.
- 88 When those in front beheld my body block  
     the light upon my dexter hand, whereby  
     the shadow stretched from me toward the rock,
- 91 They halted and withdrew somewhat more nigh  
     those following behind, and all the rest  
     did in like manner, without knowing why.
- 94 'I frankly tell you, without your request,  
     this is a human body that ye see,  
     as by the broken light is manifest.
- 97 Then do not wonder, but persuaded be  
     that not by heavenly Power unwarranted  
     to mount this barrier endeavours he.'
- 100 The Master thus; and that good people said:  
     'Then turn about and enter in before,'  
     and with the backs of hands the signal made.
- 103 'Whoever thou mayst be,' did one implore,  
     'while pressing forward, hither turn anew:  
     consider if thou sawst me there of yore.'
- 106 I turned to scan him, and there met my view  
     fair features and of gentle mien and blond,  
     although one eyebrow had been cloven through.
- 109 And when I ventured humbly to respond  
     with a denial, 'Look!'-and he laid bare  
     above his breast a sanguinary wound.
- 112 'Manfred am I,' said he with smiling air,  
     'grandson of Empress Constance: whence I pray  
     thee go, returning, to my daughter fair,

- 115 Mother of both the monarchs who bear sway,  
one in Sicilia, one in Aragon,  
and tell her truth, whatever else they say.
- 118 When these two mortal stabs had quite undone  
my body, yielded I with tears contrite  
to Him who willingly gives benison.
- 121 Horrible were my sins, but Infinite  
Bounty has arms of an embrace so broad  
that it accepts whoever turn to it.
- 124 And if Cosenza's Pastor, who at nod  
of Clement went to hunt me down, had known  
how to peruse aright this page in God,
- 127 Even now were of my body every bone  
at the bridgehead near Benevento trenched,  
beneath the safeguard of the heavy stone.
- 130 Now scattered by the wind, by the rain drenched,  
beyond the kingdom hard by Verde's flow,  
whither he carried them with tapers quenched.
- 133 By curse of theirs no soul can perish so  
but that Eternal Love for them may bloom  
while hope one particle of green can show.
- 136 True is that such as die beneath the doom  
of Holy Church, though they at last repent,  
must here outside the precipice find room,
- 139 Full thirtyfold the time that they have spent  
in their presumption, if to briefer span  
good prayers do not reduce such banishment.
- 142 Hereafter pray rejoice me, if thou can,  
revealing to my gracious Constance dear  
how thou hast seen me and alas! this ban:
- 145 For much those yonder may advance us here.'

## NOTES

'ouls unjustly excommunicated wander round the island at foot of the first precipice for a period thirtyfold that of their exclusion from the communion of the Church.'

ll. 14-15. The reflexive verb *si dislaga* flashes upon the imagination a picture which fades in translation. 'And I set my face to the hill that, emerging from the level waters, rises highest into the sky.'

ll. 16-27. Dante for the first time sees his shadow, and missing that of Virgil beside it is startled. Virgil died at Brindisi (Brundusium) on the return from Athens in the suite of Augustus, who piously carried the body to Naples, where the supposed tomb is still shown.

l. 39. Our Poet's references to the Virgin Mother are invariably tender and touching, bearing evidence that the devotion to her cult (unsympathetically termed by some 'mariolatry') had such a grip upon human nature as perhaps no other form of Christianity has ever fastened.

l. 49. The Riviera from Turbia (near Nice) to the Gulf of Spezia was traversed by a mountain-path.

ll. 55-72. This is a novel region for Virgil—a country where the mere inward light of reason is at fault. The observant Christian Poet is able to make a suggestion to his pagan Guide. The rule here is always to keep moving to the right, as the movement in Hell was always to the left. The rapid counter-movement of our two pilgrims toward the left evidently appeared to the shades alarming and possibly aggressive.

ll. 88-90. By the shadow knowing Dante to be in the body.

ll. 103-17. There is here an undercurrent of significance which it would be a pity to miss for want of familiarity with one or two historical facts. When the heroic young king Manfred lost life and kingdom at the battle of Benevento, 26 February 1266, Dante was but a babe of nine months, while Manfred's daughter Constance was old enough to have been married four years to Peter III of Aragon, and was probably already the mother of at least one son. Now when Manfred suddenly sees Dante in the flesh, apparently a man of about his own age, he makes nothing of the intervening years: 'Take thought if you ever saw me over there,' he exclaims. Although aware that his daughter is already mother of two kings, he can think of her only as young and fair as when he bade her farewell. Truly, 'Time takes no measure in Eternity'.

ll. 112 ff. For Manfred's grandmother Constance, cf. *Paradiso* iii and final note there. His daughter Constance was mother of three kings, two of whom, James of Aragon and Frederick of Sicily, are referred to near the close of Canto vii and again near the close of *Paradiso* xix. Of the tragic historical significance of the defeat and death of Manfred at the hands of the Frenchman, Charles of Anjou, who had been called in by Pope Clement IV, there is here no room to speak. We stand at one of the turning points of history.

ll. 130 ff. Treating the body as that of an excommunicated ruler.

ll. 136 ff. Manfred cannot enter Purgatory proper until thirty times the period of his excommunication shall have elapsed: that is the rule, but 'good prayers' may avail to shorten this period of hope deferred.

## CANTO IV

*The Ascent of the Mountain begun*

- 1 When an impression of delight or dole  
works on some faculty of ours, and thus  
wholly that faculty absorbs the soul,  
4 It seems of other force oblivious;  
and this is counter to that erring thought  
which would enkindle soul on soul in us.  
7 Therefore, when hearing or when seeing aught  
that draws the soul's attention potently,  
time passes by, and one perceives it not;  
10 For that which notes it is one faculty,  
another that which holds the soul intent:  
this is preoccupied, and that is free.  
13 Hereof I made a true experiment  
listening in wonder to that spirit fair;  
for now the sun had fully made ascent  
16 Fifty degrees, and I was not aware,  
when came we where cried out those spirits true  
with one accord: 'Look, your desire is there!'  
19 The hedger oft a wider passage through  
with a single forkful of his thorns can block  
what time the clustered grape is turning blue,  
22 Than was the passage where up through the rock  
my Guide alone ascended, and then I,  
turning away from that departing flock.  
25 You drop to Noli, mount San Leo high,  
and on Bismantova may scale the height  
on feet alone, but here a man must fly:  
28 I mean on nimble pinions fledged for flight  
by great desire, and following that Guide  
who held out hope to me and gave me light.  
31 Through the cleft rock we climbed; on either side  
hemmed us the lofty wall; and here the ground  
demanded that both foot and hand be plied.  
34 Emerging on the upper rim, we found  
the slope expanding freely to the sky:  
'Master,' I queried, 'whither are we bound?'

- 37 'Not a step downward!' was his quick reply:  
     'upward behind me be the mountain won  
         until some trusty escort we descrie.'
- 40 So high the peak that vision was outrun,  
     and steeper far the slope than line away  
         from centre to the middle quadrant drawn.
- 43 Weary was I when I began to pray:  
     'Dear Father, O turn hitherward and see  
         how I am left alone unless thou stay!'
- 46 'My son, draw up as far as here,' said he,  
     pointing me to a ledge just overhead  
         circling on that side all the acclivity.
- 49 So sharply spurred me on the words he said,  
     that I crept after him with might and main  
         until the terrace was beneath my tread.
- 52 There to sit down awhile we both were fain.  
     facing the East whence we had made ascent;  
         for, looking back, a man takes heart again.
- 55 Mine eyes at first to the low shores were bent,  
     thereafter lifted to the sun, whose glow  
         struck us from leftward, to my wonderment.
- 58 The Poet well perceived me gazing so  
     upon the car of light with wonder, where  
         it entered between us and Aquilo.
- 61 Whence he: 'If Castor and if Pollux were  
     companions with that mirror which sheds back  
         the light divine to either hemisphere,
- 64 Thou wouldest behold him blaze in Zodiac,  
     unto the Bears revolving still more nigh,  
         unless the sun should quit his ancient track.
- 67 If thou wouldest understand the reason why,  
     with centred thought imagine Zion-hill  
         on earth set over against this mountain high,
- 70 So that they both have one horizon still  
     and hemispheres diverse; then wilt thou see,  
         if to take heed thine intellect have skill,
- 73 How the highway that Phaëton, ah me!  
     knew not to course, must pass upon that side  
         this mountain, and this side of Zion be.'

- 76 'Truly, my Master, never yet,' I cried,  
  'saw I so clearly as I now discern,  
  since of the mark my wit seenied ever wide,  
77 That the mid-circle of the heaven suprem,  
  equator in a certain science known,  
  and which doth still 'twixt sun and winter turn,  
82 Is distant, for the reason thou hast shown,  
  northward from here as far as once the Jews  
  beheld it looking tow'rd the torrid zone.  
83 But if it please thee well, I fain would choose  
  to know how far we clamber; for so high  
  rises the Hill, that sight in vain pursues.'  
88 'This mountain slope is such,' he made reply,  
  'that low beginnings ever painful seem;  
  the toil decreases climbing tow'rd the sky.  
91 But when it comes about that thou shalt deem  
  climbing as easy as to ship and crew  
  seems gliding with the current down the stream,  
94 There is the end of this hard avenue,  
  there may thy weary limbs expect repose:  
  more I reply not, knowing this for true.'  
97 No sooner had he said such words as those,  
  than sounded out a voice near by: 'Perchance  
  he'll have to sit before so far he goes!'  
100 Both of us, turning at this utterance,  
  saw at the left a stone of massive size  
  which neither had perceived at the first glance.  
103 Thither we drew apace, till met our eyes  
  persons behind a rock, with shadow blent,  
  lying along as one in idlesse lies.  
106 And one of them, who seemed to me forspent,  
  was sitting, and was clasping both his knees,  
  holding his face deep down between them bent.  
109 'Look, Master mine,' said I, 'if one of these  
  seems not more overcome with lassitude  
  than if his sister had been slothful Ease.'  
112 At this he bent to us, and understood,  
  moving his visage up along his thigh,  
  and said: 'Now up, for thou hast hardihood!'

- 115 Then showed he features that I knew him by,  
and my still panting breath impeded not  
my going to him; and as soon as I  
118 Had reached him, he uplifted but a jot  
his brow, and murmured: 'Seest thou how the Sun  
o'er thy left shoulder drives his chariot?'  
121 His lazy mien and phrase compactly spun  
relaxed my lips to show a little glee;  
'Belacqua,' I began, 'from this time on  
124 I grieve no more for thee; but answer me,  
why sitst thou here? awaitest thou a Guide?  
or has thy wonted mood recaptured thee?'  
127 'Brother, what use in climbing?' he replied.  
'the Bird of God, at threshold of the gate,  
would not admit me to be purified.  
130 First Heaven must needs as often circulate  
round me outside, as it in life had done,  
since I put off repentance till too late;  
133 If earlier aid me not some orison  
breathed forth from soul with living grace at core  
what boot is other prayer, unheard up yon?'  
136 Already went the Poet up before,  
saying: 'Come on now: look, the Sun is bright  
on the meridian, and at the shore  
139 Morocco lies beneath the foot of Night.'

## NOTES

II. 1-12. The *Timaeus* of Plato expounds the theory of a mortal and an immortal soul in man. If this were true we could attend to two things at the same time. But we have single-track minds. The soul indeed has three different faculties: vegetative, sensitive, intellective. Dante's intellective faculty had been bound and inoperative, while his sensitive faculty was listening. This psychological problem is dealt with in the *Canticos* and will come up in the Poem from time to time. Cf. Canto xxv.

I. 16. So that it is now about nine o'clock.

I. 19. So he does in Italy to-day.

II. 25-6. Noli, then a port of some importance (36 miles west of Genoa), could be reached by the land-traveller only by a precipitous descent, cf. note to canto iii, l. 49. San Leo, a lofty hill-town west of San Marino. Bismantova, a steep mountain some 25 miles southwest of Modena. Some fancy that the Poet fashioned after it his Mount of Purgatory.

I. 26. Oxford text reads: *Su 'n Bismantova e in Cacume*; a peak of the Monti Lepini, near Frosinone in the Province of Rome, named Cacume, being perhaps referred to here.

I. 42. Steeper than an angle of forty-five degrees.

I. 55. Looking eastward in the southern hemisphere.

II. 58-66. Dante is surprised to see the sun between himself and the north wind, as he looks eastward in the forenoon. Virgil explains that, if the sun were in the sign of Gemini (the Twins, Castor and Pollux), instead of in Aries (the Ram) as it is, he would see it blazing still further northward. The sun rides with the Twins from 21 May to 21 June, when it reaches its farthest north. To Dante's apprehension the changing positions of planets and constellations are not puzzling, for he seems to picture them to his mind as distinctly as he does the map of Italy, and to make them equally an element of poetry. It is worthy of note that the Eternal Twins are referred to here as being of singular significance to Dante. Cf. the splendid close of *Paradiso* xxii.

II. 68-75. Jerusalem is conceived as at the antipodes of Purgatory. The course of the sun must therefore be north of Purgatory and south of Jerusalem. See the beginning of Canto ii.

*ll. 79-84.* That the celestial equator, which is always between sun and winter, is as far north of Purgatory as it is south of the Jewish capital. When the sun swings northward on the ecliptic it is winter south of the equator and vice versa.

*l. 123.* The soul of Belacqua (Drinkwater), an old friend of Dante's, who, though indolent of temperament, has the characteristic Florentine shrewdness of wit. He chaffs Dante for needing this elementary astronomical instruction.

*l. 137.* It is noon in Purgatory; therefore the other hemisphere, from the Ganges to Morocco, is in darkness—the night just beginning in Morocco.

This canto alone would suffice to confute the assertion sometimes made that geographical knowledge had died out in the Middle Ages. The placing of the Mount of Purgatory at the antipodes of Jerusalem—making these points the centres of two hemispheres of which the Equator is the common horizon—is enough to prove that Dante was keenly alive to the fact of the sphericity of our planet. And when, in carrying us southward on that last voyage of Ulysses, he makes us aware of the shifting of the horizon as the northern constellations gradually sink into the sea, while those of the south emerge, he is virtually re-stating one of Aristotle's major proofs that the earth is indeed a globe.

## CANTO V

*Tragic Deaths of Three Noble Souls*

- 1 Now from those shades departing, I betook  
myself my Leader's footmarks to pursue,  
when one behind me, pointing, shouted: 'Look,  
4 The sunbeam seems not to be shining through  
leftward from him below; and more by token  
he seems to bear him as the living do!'  
7 I turned about to look when this was spoken,  
and saw them gaze at me for marvel—yea  
at me, and at the sunbeam that was broken.  
10 'Why is thy mind diverted from the way  
to make thee loiter?' said my Master kind;  
'what carest thou up here how whisper they?  
13 Come after me and let them speak their mind;  
stand like a tower unwavering and stout  
against whatever buffets of the wind.  
16 For he who thinks about it and about  
falls short, forever thwarted of his aim,  
since one thought by the next is cancelled out.'  
19 I said, 'I come!'—how answer else for shame?  
and said it with that flush which may restore us  
to pardon, if we worthily lay claim.  
22 Behold now people who, short way before us  
across the Mountain passing, as they go  
sing *Miserere* verse about in chorus.  
25 Seeing my body interrupt the flow  
of sunlight, and enshadowing the plain,  
they changed the singing to a long hoarse *Oh!*  
28 And in the form of messengers came twain  
running toward us from that multitude,  
desiring knowledge of our state to gain.  
31 'Ye can go back,' replied my Master good,  
'to those who sent you forth, and certify  
that this man's body is true flesh and blood.  
34 And if to see his shadow made them shy  
as I suppose, enough: let them endeavour  
to do him honour, profiting thereby.'

- 37 So swiftly enkindled vapours saw I never  
     at early evening cleave the sky serene,  
     nor yet the sunset clouds of August sever,
- 40 As these returning up again were seen;  
     then wheeled to usward with the rest along,  
     like troops that gallop without drawing rein.
- 43 'These crowd upon us in a mighty throng,'  
     the Poet said, 'to make thee one request;  
     yet go, and going, listen to their wrong.'
- 46 'O pilgrim soul who goest to be blest  
     with those limbs fashioned in thy mother's mould  
     stay but a moment!'—cried they as they pressed.
- 49 'Look if thou sawest one of us of old,  
     that thou to earth mayst tidings of him bear:  
     pray why dost thou go on? pray why not hold?
- 52 We all were slain by violence whilere,  
     and sinners till the final hour of grace;  
     then light from Heaven made us so well aware
- 55 That, penitent and pardoning, apace  
     we quitted life at peace with the Most High,  
     who heartens us with yearning for his face.'
- 58 'Although I scan your lineaments,' said I,  
     'not one do I recall; but pray ye speak,  
     if aught to please you in my power there lie,
- 61 And I will do it, happy spirits meek,  
     by hope of peace which, following up the Hill  
     behind such Guide, from world to world I seek.'
- 64 And one began: 'We all are trusting still  
     in thy good offices, no need to swear,  
     provided weakness do not cancel will:
- 67 Whence I alone before the rest make prayer  
     that, if thou see the countryside one day,  
     lying 'twixt Charles's and Romagna fair,
- 70 Thou of thy courtesy for me wilt pray  
     in Fano, so that there be orisons  
     to help me purge my heavy sins away.
- 73 Thence came I; but the gashes wherethrough once  
     issued the blood wherein I had my seat,  
     were dealt to me among Antenor's sons,

- 76 There where I sanctied safes; my retreat:  
    the Este had it done, who held me then  
        in anger more by far than justly meet.
- 79 But had I fled toward La Mira, when  
    at Oriaco by pursuers found,  
        still were I vondet among breathing men.
- 82 I ran to the marsh; the mud and reeds around  
    so hampered me I fell, and there saw I  
        my blood become a pool upon the ground.'
- 85 'Ah, by that yearning,' did another sigh,  
    'whereby to the High Mountain drawest thou,  
        do thou aid mine with pious sympathy.'
- 88 I was of Montefeltro, merely now  
    Buonconte; heeds me none, not even Joan,  
        whence among these I go with downcast brow.'
- 91 And I: 'From Campaldino lost alone  
    by chance wast thou, or violence malign,  
        so that thy burial place was never known?'
- 94 'Oh,' said he, 'runs athwart the Casentine  
    a stream called Archiano, rising o'er  
        the Hermitage, aloft in Apennine.
- 97 There where it answers to that name no more  
    came I with throat empierced, as I fled  
        on foot along the plain, marked with my gore.
- 100 There eyesight failed me, and the prayer I said  
    paused on the name of Mary; there I fell,  
        and there my flesh remained untenanted.
- 103 The truth I speak among the living tell:  
    God's Angel took me: "Why wilt thou be stealing  
        mine own, thou son of Heaven?" cried he of Hell;
- 106 "With his immortal art thou skyward wheeling;  
    that part I forfeit for one little tear;  
        but with the other use I other dealing."
- 109 Thou knowest how gathers in the atmosphere  
    that vaporous moisture, soon to water turning  
        by the chill pressure of the upper sphere.
- 112 That Evil Will, for evil only yearning,  
    endowed with native power intelligent, [ing.  
        joined and moved cloud and wind with sell discern-

- 115 So he, thereafter, day being fully spent,  
from Pratomagno to the Great Yoke fills  
with fog the valley and veils the firmament
- 118 And into water the teeming air distils;  
down through the gullies comes the fallen rain,—  
all thirsty earth could drink not,—and the rills
- 121 Into great torrents gathering amain,  
headlong toward the royal river bore  
with such a rush that weir and dike were vain.
- 124 Wild Archiano found my body frore  
hard by his outlet, sweeping it inert  
into the Arno, and from my bosom tore
- 127 The cross I made me, conquered by the hurt;  
whelmed me along by many a bank and shoal,  
then with his shingle covered me and girt.'
- 130 'Ah, when thou turnest to an earthly goal,  
and shalt have rested from the weary way,'—  
the second ceasing, followed a third soul,—
- 133 'Remember me, who am Pia, when thou pray;  
Siena made me, by Maremma undone:  
he knows who ringed me, ringless till that day,
- 136 Espousing me with gem and benison.'

## NOTES

*A lower slope of the Mountain. Early afternoon of the first day.*

II. 16-18. Implying, perhaps, that these souls had neglected action through 'some craven scruple of thinking too precisely on the event'.

II. 37-9. The reference is to meteors and to lightning, which were both supposed to be due, according to the theory of Aristotle, to ignited vapours, i.e. what we term gas.

II. 64 ff. Jacopo del Cassero, a distinguished nobleman of Fano, waylaid near Padua by assassins in the pay of Marquis Azzo, lord of Ferrara. Charles's, i.e. kingdom of Naples, under Charles of Anjou. The land between the Romagna and that of Charles is the March of Ancona, southward from Rimini along the Adriatic.

II. 75-80. The sons of Antenor were the Paduans. Antenor, having been considered in the Middle Ages a typical traitor, it is probable that Dante means to hint at some collusion between the Paduans and the tyrant Azzo of Este. La Mira and Oriaco are places in the lowlands along the Brenta between Padua and Venice. He thinks that, had he only fled in the other direction, he would still be in the land of the living, able to bear fruits meet for repentance!

II. 88 ff. Buonconte da Montefeltro, son of the renowned captain who speaks in *Inferno* xxvii. Dante himself fought in this battle of Campaldino (1289). The contrast between the story of the son and that of the father is marked with artistic intention. He begins by referring to the contrast between his greatness on earth and his present humble state; no one takes thought for him now, not even Joan (Giovanna) his wife. After that line of Dantean reserve, 'io fui di Montefeltro, io son Buonconte', the translator limps, helpless as the wounded and dismounted knight.

II. 112 ff. Since the Devil, embodiment of Evil Will, finds himself foiled of the soul, he raises a great storm whereby to wreak spite upon the body of the unfortunate hero. An exceptionally interesting parallel to this is found in Calderon's *El Mdgico Prodigioso* (nobly translated by FitzGerald under title of *The Mighty Magician*). In both the contrast is drawn between the power of the Fiend over the elements on the one hand, and on the other his impotence in conflict with Human Will.

I. 116. The Pratomagno (great meadow) is the mountain

chain between the Valdarno and the Casentino. The Great Yoke is the main range of the Apennine, cf. *Inferno* xxx. 64-6 (note).

*I.* 127. He had crossed his arms over his breast in prayer.

*II.* 130-6. Pia, of the great house of the Tolomei, flung by a faithless husband from his castle-crag in the wilds of the Tuscan Maremma. Pia thinks first of Dante and begs his prayers only after he shall have rested from the long pilgrimage. She names not her family nor her brutal husband; there is no word of blame; she mentions only her birthplace and place of death and the central event of a woman's life, her wedding. How she died *he* knows; *we* may infer, if we will, that she may have been a victim of the miasmatic Maremma. Perfect lines, such as these in the liquid Italian, are of course untranslatable.

## CANTO VI

*Dante the 'Stormy Voice' of Italy*

- 1 When breaks the game of hazard, he who lost  
    remains behind in sorrow, and essays  
    the throws again, thus learning to his cost;
- 4 With the winner all the others go their ways:  
    one in advance, one plucks him from the rear,  
    and for reminder one beside him stays.
- 7 He hastens,—all soliciting his ear,—  
    his hand goes out to some, who leave him free,—  
    and so from pressure of the crowd gets clear.
- 10 So I, amid that thronging company,  
    was turning to them here and there my face,  
    and making promise, extricated me.
- 13 The Arctine who in the grim embrace  
    of Ghin di Tacco perished, with them stood,  
    and the other who was drowned while giving chase.
- 16 There prayed, with hands in suppliant attitude,  
    Frederick Novello, and that Pisan son  
    who proved the good Marzucco's fortitude.
- 19 I saw Count Orso, and the soul of one  
    bereft of life by spite, as he averred,  
    and envy, not for any trespass done,—
- 22 Pier de la Brosse, I mean: and may this word  
    prompt the Lady of Brabant to heedfulness  
    lest she for this consort with baser herd.
- 25 As soon as I was free from all the stress  
    of shades, who prayed that other prayer benign  
    might speed them on the way to holiness,
- 28 Thus I began: 'It seems, O light of mine,  
    in one text thou expressly questionest  
    that orison may bend decree divine;
- 31 And yet these people only this request:  
    can it be possible their hope is vain?  
    or is to me thy word not manifest?'
- 34 And he responded: 'What I wrote is plain,  
    and not fallacious is the hope of these  
    if one consider it with reason sane'

- 37 For Top of Judgement stoops not when the pleas  
of burning love do in a moment what  
these do who here await the slow decrees.
- 40 And in the instance where I tied that knot,  
prayer did not counterbalance the defect.  
since, from God disunited, prayer was not.
- 43 Howbeit, waive decision in respect  
to doubt so deep, till she interpret this,  
who shall be light 'twixt truth and intellect.
- 46 Be assured that here I speak of Beatrice:  
her shalt thou see above, upon the crown  
of this same Mountain, smiling and in bliss.'
- 49 And I: 'Lord, let us hasten to be gone,  
for I am not as hitherto forspent,  
and look, the hill now casts a shadow down.'
- 52 'As much as possible of the ascent,  
will we perform to-day,' responded he,  
'but other than thou thinkest is the event.'
- 55 Ere thou canst climb up yonder, thou wilt see  
return that light so hidden that its ray  
is interrupted now no more by thee.
- 58 But see! there is a spirit making stay  
all, all alone, and looking tow'rd this side;  
*it will point out to us the speediest way'*
- 61 We thither came. O Lombard soul, what pride  
and lofty scorn thine attitude expressed.  
and thy slow-moving eyes how dignified!
- 64 As we came on he proffered no request,  
but let us go our way, calmly surveying  
in manner of a lion when at rest.
- 67 Steadily drew up Virgil tow'rd him, praying  
direction where ascent might best be made;  
but he, no word by way of answer saying,
- 70 News of our life and of our country prayed.  
And when thereto the gentle Guide began,—  
'Mantua—' upleaped that all-secluded shade
- 73 From where before he stood: 'O Mantuan,  
I am Sordello of thy city!'—said he,  
and to embrace of each the other ran.

- 76 Hostel of woe, ah, servile Italy,  
vessel unpiloted in a great storm.  
no Lady of provinces, but harlotry!
- 79 Eager that noble spirit was and warm  
to welcome there his own compatriot,  
so did the sweet name of his city charm!
- 82 While now in civil tumult are distraught  
thy living citizens,—at daggers drawn  
those whom one wall incloses, and one moat.
- 85 Make search around thy seaboard, wretched one,  
and after in thy bosom look again,  
if anywhere within be unison!
- 88 What boots Justinian adjust the rein  
if ever empty be the saddle? Without  
such bridle not so black would be the stain.
- 91 Ah, gentry, ye that ought to be devout  
and let but Cæsar in his saddle sit,  
nor leave unheeded what God pointed out,
- 94 Look well to this wild beast, consider it,  
ungoaded by the spur how fell it grows  
since ye laid hand upon the bridle-bit!
- 97 O German Albert, who to such as those  
yieldest this wild unruly animal,  
and oughtest to bestride her saddlebows,
- 100 May from the stars upon thy issue fall  
just judgement, and be it strange and manifest  
such that it may thy follower appal!
- 103 Thy father suffered, and thou sufferest,  
held back up yonder by the greed of you,  
the garden of the Empire go to waste.
- 106 Come look at Capulet and Montague,  
Monaldi and Filippeschi, man remiss,  
these dreading that which those already rue.
- 109 Come, cruel prince, see the iniquities  
thy nobles suffer, cure their hurts,—nay, come  
see Santafiora how secure it is!
- 112 Come hear the outcries of thy weeping Rome  
by day and night, a widow and alone:  
'My Cæsar, why forsakest thou thy home?'

- 115 Come, see how much the folk to love are prone;  
     and if for us no pity in thee lie  
         come and take shame to thee for thy renown.
- 118 And if it be allowed me, Jove most High,  
     thou who for us on earth wast crucified,  
         is otherwhere averted thy just eye?
- 121 Or is it discipline thou dost provide  
     in thy deep counsel, for some useful plan  
         to our perception utterly denied?
- 124 Swarm in Italian towns the tyrant clan,  
     and a Marcellus comes incipient  
         in every churl who plays the partisan.
- 127 My Florence, thou indeed mayst be content  
     with this aside,—thy withers are unwrung,  
         thanks to thy people all so provident.
- 130 The bow of justice is but slowly strung  
     by many, who let no random arrow fly:  
         thy people have justice pat upon the tongue.
- 133 Many would put the public burden by,  
     but answers eagerly thy populace  
         unbidden: ‘Shoulder to the wheel!’ they cry.
- 136 Good reason hast thou to take heart of grace:  
     if sooth I say the facts do not conceal,  
         thou wealthy and thou wise and thou at peace!
- 139 The Athenian and the Spartan commonweal,  
     long famed for art and law, gave feeble proof  
         of civil life to what thy deeds reveal,
- 142 Who with such foresight weave in that behoof,  
     that reach not to the middle of November  
         the filmy threadlets of October’s woof.
- 145 How often hast thou changed (canst thou remember?)  
     law, coinage, offices, time out of mind,  
         and usage, renovating every member.
- 148 And were thy memory not so short or blind,  
     thou wouldest see thyself in that sick woman, fain  
         a little rest upon her couch to find,
- 151 Who would by tossing ward away her pain.

## NOTES

*First day, mid-afternoon. Up the lower flank of the Mountain.*

ll. 13-24. Those curious to see these old woes 'step on the stage again' are referred to Toynbee's *Dictionary*, Vernon's *Readings*, &c. Of that picturesque gentleman-bandit, Ghin di Tacco, Boccaccio tells a good story (*Decamerone*, x. 2). Pier de la Brosse was the favourite of the weak King Philip III of France, son of Saint Louis. After the second marriage of Philip to Marie, beautiful daughter of the Duke of Brabant, the eldest son and heir to the throne was poisoned, apparently as the result of an obscure court intrigue. In satisfaction of justice Pier was hanged, but Dante finds him innocent and more than hints at the guilt of the young queen. Philip himself is mentioned in Canto vii, l. 103 (*Quel Nasetto*—He of the small nose).

ll. 28-46. *Aeneid* vi. 376: 'Cease to expect to bend the divine decree.' Virgil proceeds to point out the obvious distinction between the case of the pagan Palinurus and the cases before us, and then counsels Dante to look to Beatrice for more authoritative elucidation of 'doubt so deep'. Supreme reverence for Virgil is exhibited here; he is cited and questioned as if he were one of the sainted fathers of the Church. The expression Top of Judgement (*Cima di Giudizio*) is used by Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ii. ii. 75-7:

'How would you be  
If He, which is the top of judgement, should  
But judge you as you are?'

l. 47. In the Earthly Paradise.

ll. 61-75. Sordello, a Lombard by birth, who, on account of an intrigue with the Cunizza whom we shall meet in Canto ix of *Paradiso*, was obliged to take refuge abroad. After residing at various courts of France and Spain he was some time in Provence, where he became celebrated as a troubadour in the time of Count Raymond Berenger, one of the great potentates of the western world (see close of *Paradiso* vi). Sordello returned to Italy in the train of Charles of Anjou, who rewarded him for great services. Browning, in his diffuse, elliptical, magnificent poem, gives a quite other impression of Sordello than that given here.

ll. 76 ff. Political chaos of that age.

*ll.* 88–90. Of what avail the law without a power to enforce?

*ll.* 91 ff. The claim of the clergy to temporal power.

*l.* 97. Albert, son of the Emperor Rudolph, absentee King of the Romans.

*ll.* 106–8. Warring families in Guelf and Ghibelline feuds.

*l.* 111. The counts of Santa Fiora of the great Aldobrandeschi family, gradually suppressed by Siena (cf. Canto xi).

*ll.* 124–6. Every upstart demagogue thinks to play a part against the Empire like that of a Marcellus (there were three!) against Caesar, who was regarded as founder of the Empire.

The burst of eloquence that fills the second half of this Canto has been regarded by Italians as a chief justification for setting up the figure of the divine Poet as the venerated prophet of their national unity, finally consummated at such heroic cost, six centuries after the birth of Dante.

## CANTO VII

*The Negligent Princes*

- 1 After the courtly and glad greetings now  
again a third time and a fourth began,  
Sordello drew back saying: 'Who art thou?'  
4 'Ere to this Mount turned any soul of man  
worthy to rise with God to be enskied,  
my bones were buried by Octavian.  
7 For want of faith and for no fault beside  
did I, who am Virgil, forfeit Paradise.'  
So forthwith made reply to him my Guide.  
10 Like one confronting with bewildered eyes  
some sudden wonder unbeheld before,  
who murmurs, ' 'Tis, 'tis not!' believes, denies,  
13 Sordello stood; then bowed his forehead lower,  
turning to greet my Leader with embrace  
more humble, where lays hold the inferior.  
16 'O glory,' exclaimed he, 'of the Latin race,  
through whom our language showed its worth so well,  
O praise eternal of my native place,  
19 What merit shows thee or what miracle?  
if I be worthy held thy news to know,  
say from what cloister com'st thou, if from Hell?'  
22 'Through all the circles of the world of woe  
am I come hither,' so he made reply,  
'moved by a power of Heaven whereby I go.  
25 Omitting, not committing, forfeit I  
sight of the Dayspring where thy longings rise,  
and which was known by me too tardily.  
28 There is a place below not otherwise  
tormented save with gloom, where the laments  
are uttered not in wailing but in sighs;  
31 There I abide with little innocents  
bitten by fangs of Death and all undone  
ere yet exempt from man's maleficence;  
34 There I abide with those who put on none  
of the three holy virtues, yet who knew  
the others, following guiltless every one.

- 37 But if thou know and can, afford some clue  
     to us, whereby we may arrive apace  
         where Purgatory has beginning true.'
- 40 He answered: 'We are bound to no fixed place;  
     I lawfully may wander up and round,  
         and join you as guide for my allotted space.'
- 43 But look! the day declining to the bound,  
     and we are powerless to ascend by night;  
         then let us think of pleasant resting-ground.
- 46 Souls dwell secluded yonder to the right:  
     unto them will I lead if thou consent,  
         nor will acquaintance be without delight.'
- 49 'How so?' was asked, 'if any made ascent  
     by night, would he be then inhibited  
         by another, or would want of power prevent?'
- 52 'Look!' and the good Sordello's finger sped  
     along the ground, 'the sun being parted hence  
         thou couldst not even cross this line,' he said;
- 55 'Not that there else would be impediments  
     to going up save shades nocturnal,—they  
         would trammel up the will with impotence.'
- 58 One might indeed in darkness downward stray,  
     and make the tour of the whole mountain-ring,  
         while the horizon prisons up the day.'
- 61 Then said my Master, as if wondering:  
     'Now lead us on whither, by thy report,  
         we may have some delight while tarrying.'
- 64 Thence on the Mountain was the distance short  
     when of a hollow I became aware,—  
         valleys down here are hollowed in such sort.
- 67 'Yonder,' proposed that shade, 'let us repair  
     where inward-curving slopes a dell surround,  
         and dawning of new day await we there.'
- 70 Now level and now steep, a pathway wound  
     that led us to a margin where the height  
         half falls away before that hollow ground.
- 73 Gold, silver fine, scarlet and pearly white,  
     clear Indian wood of azure loveliness,  
         or fresh-flaked emerald would be less bright

- 76 Than were the grass and flowers in that recess:  
    in colour each of these would be outdone  
        as by the greater is outdone the less.
- 79 Nor yet was Nature a mere painter yon,  
    but did from thousand odours sweet distil  
        a subtly blended fragrance known to none.
- 82 *Salve Regina*, with such chanting thrill  
    the souls on bloom and greensward there at rest,  
        concealed before by hollow of the hill.
- 85 'Before the faint sun settle to his nest,'  
    the Mantuan said who made us thither swerve,  
        'do not my guidance among these request.
- 88 From vantage of this bank ye will observe  
    the features and the acts of all and some,  
        better than down among them in the curve.
- 91 He highest placed, to whom seems burdensome  
    that he neglected what he ought, for song  
        upon the lips of others finds him dumb,
- 94 Was Rudolph, Emperor, who feels the prong  
    in unhealed wounds, fatal to Italy,  
        while healing through another tarries long.
- 97 The next, who seems his comforter to be,  
    governed the country whence the waters spring  
        Moldau bears Elbe, Elbe to the sea,—
- 100 His name was Ottocar, far better king  
    as babe, than bearded Wenceslaus, his child,  
        in luxury and idlesse battening.
- 103 That small-nosed one, with him of aspect mild  
    so close in counsel, as seems manifest,  
        died fleeing and left the fleur-de-lis defiled:
- 106 Look there, how he is beating at his breast!  
    and yonder at his sighing partner glance  
        who on his palm has laid his cheek at rest.
- 109 Father and father-in-law of the plague of France  
    are these,—they know his vicious life and lewd,  
        and hence the grief that pierces like a lance.
- 112 He who so stalwart seems, whose song in mood  
    accords with that of him of virile nose,  
        wore girt the cord of every manly good;

- 115 And if the youth who yonder doth repose  
behind him had long governed in his stead,  
worth would have passed from vase to vase in those;
- 118 This of the other heirs cannot be said:  
while James and Frederick the kingdoms sway,  
none has the better share inherited.
- 121 Not often rises up through branch and spray  
prowess of man: such is the Will Divine  
in order that from Him the gift we pray.
- 124 My words apply as well to the aquiline  
as to his fellow-singer, Peter: yet  
Apulia and Provence thereat repine.
- 127 Less is the plant than seed that did beget  
by how much Constance still her spouse may praise  
more than can Beatrice and Margaret.
- 130 Look at the monarch of the simple ways,  
Harry of England, sitting there alone:  
better the issue that his branches raise.
- 133 That one of them whose eyes are upward thrown  
is Marquis William, humblest among these,  
for whom Alessandria and her war make moan
- 136 Both Monserrato and the Canavesce.'

## NOTES

*Late afternoon of the first day. Some place on the mountain-side.*

l. 15. Embracing either knees or feet: cf. Matthew xxviii. 9, . . . 'took hold of his feet and adored him'.

ll. 16 ff. Cf. the eulogy upon Virgil, *Inferno* i.

l. 21. As in *Inferno* xxix. 40-2, the divisions of Hell are referred to as the cells of a monastery.

ll. 22-30. It is to be noted that Virgil does not, as heretofore, speak of himself as the guide of Dante, of whom Sordello takes no notice until, in the middle of Canto viii, he is startled to learn that this silent follower of Virgil is still in the first life.

ll. 31-3. Unbaptised infants. Cf. the explanation of the importance and efficacy of baptism in *Pecado* xxxii.

ll. 43-60. Sordello, explaining that here is no possibility of ascent by night, proposes to lead them to a pleasant place where the First of the three nights upon the Mountain may be spent. One walks by sunlight; night is for profitable converse and study, and for sleep attended by symbolic visions. The allegorical significance of all this may be left to the reader's consideration.

ll. 73-9. The medieval taste for brilliant colouring, and for an abundance of particulars heaped up rather than grouped, appears in these lines. Nature seems to be painting

'Upon a background of pale gold  
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers'.

There is much question about line 74: Norton understands *indigo* to be meant, translating: 'Indian wood bright and clear blue'. So also Torracca, perhaps the best of modern editors. Grandgent, who commonly follows Torracca, here decides that the substance referred to is *amber*! But Dante would hardly have omitted a colour so common in nature as the blue of the sky or that of violets.

ll. 103-14. Philip III of France and Henry I of Navarre; the 'plague of France' is Philip the Fair; the stalwart King is Peter of Aragon, husband of the Constance of Canto iii. He of the virile nose is Charles I of Anjou, who defeated Mansfred at Benevento.

ll. 121-3. Chaucer (born a few years after Dante's death) translates these lines in the tale of the 'Wyf of Bath':

'Ful selde up ryseth by his branches smale  
Prowesse of man; for god, of his goodnesse,  
Wol that of him we clayme our gentilesse.'

*ll. 127-9.* Dante here condenses into three lines more than even he could make clear to one not fully acquainted with all the facts involved. In *Paradiso* vi. 133, we read: 'Four daughters had Count Raymond Berenger and each of them a queen. Of these Margaret was married to Louis IX (Saint Louis) and Beatrice to his brother Charles of Anjou, the conqueror of Mansfred. Constance, whom we already know as the fair daughter of Mansfred (conclusion of Canto iii), was wife of Peter the Great of Aragon and mother of Frederick and James. All these personages were well known to Dante's contemporary readers. Now the Poet has one of those sudden visions that come to the great dramatic poets: the vision of a meeting between Constance and the two sisters who were the queens of the two royal brothers. Naturally they talk of husbands and children. 'Peter was kind and good, as well as great,' boasts Constance. 'So much,' confess the sisters, 'we cannot claim for our husbands; but if they were inferior to your lord, your own children, as well as ours, are equally inferior to them' (Cf. *Paradiso* xix. 127-38). The only objection to this interpretation is that it places Louis IX much on a level with his brother 'of the virile nose'. Accordingly we may, if we like, consider the Margaret in question to be the second wife of the first Charles of Anjou—Margaret of Burgundy. But that would be relatively prosaic!

*ll. 130 ff.* Harry of England is Henry III, father of Edward I. Marquis William is the good but unfortunate ruler of Montferrat (in Piedmont). The citizens of Alessandria and Asti are said to have taken him by treachery, thrusting him into a cage where he died. His son attempted to avenge him but was repulsed by help of the Visconti, whence his subjects lament in Montferrat and the *dolce terra* of the Canavese. In the *Contro* (IV. ii) he is one of the examples of the virtue of liberality.

## CANTO VIII

*Happy Interview with Departed Shades*

- 1 Now was the hour that melts the heart anew  
in voyagers with yearning for the shore  
the day beloved friends have said adieu,
- 4 And the new pilgrim feels the pang once more  
of love, on hearing from the far-off land  
bells that belike the parting day deplore,
- 7 When I began no more to understand  
his words, on seeing a soul among them there  
uprisen, who craved a hearing with its hand.
- 10 It joined both palms and lifted them in air,  
fixing its eyes toward the orient,  
as saying to God, 'I have no other care!'
- 13 *Te lucis ante* in notes so sweetly blent  
came from those lips devout, all my concern  
lapsed and was lost in rapturous content.
- 16 As led that soul, the others in their turn  
with sweet devotion did the hymn pursue,  
holding their eyes upon the wheels supern.
- 19 Sharpen thine eyes here, Reader, to the true,  
for now so thin the veil that penetration  
is surely easy to the inward view.
- 22 I saw that gentle host with adoration  
silent while upward did their look ascend,  
pallid and meek, as if in expectation:
- 25 And saw emerge and from aloft descend  
two angels, with two swords of flame unsailing  
but broken off and blunted at the end.
- 28 Green as new leafbud only now unveiling,  
their raiment, fanned by throbbing pinions green,  
in airy wasture was behind them trailing.
- 31 Above us one took post with guardian mien,  
the other on the margin opposite,  
so that the people were contained between.
- 34 Well I perceived their tresses blond, but sight  
could only be confounded by the face,  
like faculty blind with excess of light.

- 37 'From their embosoming in Mary's grace,'  
 Sordello said, 'to guard the vale these two  
 come, for the Serpent will arrive apace.'
- 40 Whence I, because nowise their way I knew,  
 strove by the trusty shoulders to remain  
 close sheltered, for I felt me frozen through.
- 43 'Now go we down,' Sordello said again,  
 'and with the mighty shades exchange replies:  
 to bid you welcome will they all be fain.'
- 46 Three paces peradventure might suffice  
 for my descent; and one did gazing pore  
 upon me, as in hope to recognize.
- 49 Already was the air endarkened more,  
 but not so that between his eye and mine  
 it failed to show what it had locked before.
- 52 Tow'rd me he comes and I to him incline:  
 noble Judge Nino, happy was my case  
 when I beheld thee not of the malign!
- 55 Silent between us was no word of grace;  
 whereon he asked: 'How long since camest thou  
 through the far waters to the Mountain's base?'
- 58 'Oh!' said I, 'out of dismal caves below  
 this morning come, in the first life am I,  
 but hope to gain the other, going so.'
- 61 As soon as ever heard' they my reply,  
 Sordello and that spirit backward drew  
 like startled folk whose impulse is to fly.
- 64 One turned to Virgil, and the other to  
 a soul there seated: 'Conrad, look, the Lord  
 has willed through Grace a wondrous thing to do!'
- 67 Then turned to me: 'By thanks thou must accord  
 to Him for special grace, who doth so hide  
 His own first wherfore that it has no ford,
- 70 When thou shalt be beyond the billows wide,  
 say to my Joan that she for me implore  
 where answer to the pure is not denied.
- 73 I think her mother cares for me no more,  
 since she has laid aside her wimples white  
 which she, poor thing, shall yet be craving for.

- 76 By her example may be seen aright  
 how brief the fire of love in woman's breast  
 unless rekindled oft by touch or sight.
- 79 Less fair an emblem for her burial chest  
 the Viper leading Milan to the field,  
 than would have been the Cock, Gallura's crest!"
- 82 While he was speaking thus, his face revealed  
 that upright zeal wherewith the heart may be  
 aflame, and in due measure stamped and sealed.
- 85 Ranging the heavens my eager eyes could see  
 only the place where most the stars are slow,  
 as in a wheel nearest the axletree.
- 88 'Son,' said my Guide, 'at what art gazing so?'  
 'At those three starry torches,' I replied,  
 'wherewith the hither Pole is all aglow.'
- 91 'Low are the splendid stars on yonder side,  
 those four thou sawst at early dawn to-day,  
 and in their places these are now enskied.'
- 94 Sordello seized him as he thus did say,  
 exclaiming, 'See our enemy advance!'  
 with finger guiding him to look that way.
- 97 At that part where the little valley slants  
 devoid of barrier, crept a Snake along,—  
 such offered Eve the bitter food perchance.
- 100 The evil streak the grass and flowers among,  
 with head reversed like beast that licks its fell,  
 came undulating on with dartling tongue.
- 103 I did not see and cannot therefore tell  
 how the celestial hawks their stations left,  
 but saw the motion of each sentinel.
- 106 Feeling the air by their green pinions cleft,  
 the Serpent fled; both wheeling up as one  
 the angels lighted, having barred the theft.
- 109 The shade, that close beside the Judge had drawn  
 when he exclaimed, had not removed its eyes  
 cleaving to me till that assault was done.
- 112 'So in the taper lighting to the skies  
 the wax of thy free will may not abate  
 until thou reach the flowery Paradise,'

- 115 Began he, 'canst thou tidings true relate  
of Valdimagra, or of region nigh,  
tell it to me, for there I once was great.'
- 118 Conrad the Malaspina called was I;  
the elder not, although from him descended;  
my love of kindred here I purify.'
- 121 'Oh,' cried I, 'through your land I never wended,  
but where in Europe dwells one so forlorn  
as never to have heard their fame commended?'
- 124 Renown and honour that your house adorn  
proclaim the land, proclaim her every lord,  
so that he knows who never reached that bourn.'
- 127 And by my pilgrim hope I give my word  
your honoured kindred do not strip away  
the virtue of the purse and of the sword.
- 130 Chartered by custom and by nature, they  
though the bad leader warp the world aside,  
alone go straight, and scorn the evil way.'
- 133 And he: 'Now look,—seven times shall not abide  
the sun, returning back within the bed  
the Ram's four feet now cover and bestride,
- 136 Ere this opinion, courteously said,,  
with better nails than hearsay hammered home,  
shall pierce the very middle of thy head,
- 139 Unless arrested be the course of doom.'

## NOTES

*Nightfall in the beautiful mountain-nook where wait the princes.*

ll. 13 ff. *Te lucis ante terminum*: 'To Thee before the close of light'. The first words of the hymn of Saint Ambrose sung at the office of Compline after the Angelus. The following is the rendering used by the Anglican Church:

'Before the ending of the day,  
Creator of the world, we pray  
That Thou with wonted love wouldest keep  
Thy watch around us while we sleep.'

These disembodied spirits of the negligent, who had postponed making their peace with God and are not yet admitted to happy purgatorial penance, are supposed by the Poet to be still subject to the terror of the Evil One, if not to assault by him, and are in need of reassurance by night from guardian angels. As to the further meaning of the allegory to which the Poet calls especial attention, terming it easy of discernment, I think it may safely be left to the meditative reader, but desire to add the following comment by Dante's own son, Pietro: 'The broken swords represent our defence against the temptations of the Devil. For we ought to flee, not to fear, these temptations. . . . For we cannot kill the Devil, but only fly from him after the example of Christ, who said to the Devil wishing to tempt him, "Begone, Satan, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God".'

l. 53. Judge Nino Visconti, Pisan governor of the Province of Gallura, Sardinia.

l. 57. The references to the 'far waters', and again in line 70 to the 'wide billows', are in exquisite dramatic keeping in the mouth of one who had spent his life as an island proconsul.

l. 62. Sordello has been preoccupied with Virgil, and, the sun being behind the Mountain, Dante's shadow was not visible.

ll. 70-84. He sends word, as Mansfred had done, to his daughter, who was then only about nine years of age. She was married to the great lord whose assassination is predicted by Cunizza in *Paradiso* ix. 50-1. This was in 1312 when she was still little more than twenty. Afterwards pensioned for a time by Pisa, she finally found refuge in Florence where, notwithstanding an allowance from the Commune, she lived in

poverty, dying at about the date of the appearance of the earliest codex of the *Divina Commedia* that has come down to us (1336). It is reasonable to believe that the reference to her in the Poem must have been a consolation. This can hardly be supposed of her mother, who at the date of the mystic pilgrimage was looking forward to marriage with Galeazzo Visconti, son of the tyrant of Milano, whose cognizance was the Viper.

ll. 89-93. Symbolizing the Christian virtues, as the four mentioned in Canto i symbolize the pagan virtues of everyday life.

ll. 97 ff. This incursion of the Serpent into the abode of the dead is purely allegorical. See note to lines 13 ff.

ll. 112-14. If it be 'illuminative grace' that leads him up, it is evidently unavailing without being fed by the free will of the pilgrim. Upon reaching the 'sommo smalto' at the top of the Mountain, Dante will be given over to the guidance of Beatrice.

ll. 118-20. The elder Conrad was married to Constance, sister of King Manfred. The present spirit is his grandson and cousin of the lord who later entertained the Poet.

ll. 133 ff. Dante was the honoured guest of the Malaspina in the Lunigiana in 1306.

## CANTO IX

*The Symbolic Gate*

- 1 Now did the mistress of Tithonus hoar  
show at the eastern window, clad in white,  
forth from the arms of her dear paramour;
- 4 Her brow was glittering with jewels bright  
set in the figure of that monster cold  
which strikes at people with his tail; and Night
- 7 Had two already of the paces told  
wherewith she rises where our steps were stayed,  
and the third hour began her wings to fold,
- 10 When I, on whom something of Adam weighed,  
conquered by slumber, sank upon the lawn  
where all we five the nightly vigil made.
- 13 Upon the hour when, very near to dawn,  
begins the twittering swallow to repine,  
perchance in memory of her woes foregone,
- 16 When anxious thoughts less narrowly confine,  
and when the pilgrim soul, from flesh more free,  
is in her visions very near divine,
- 19 Then poised aloft did I appear to see  
an eagle, with gold plumage, in my dream,  
with open wings, intent to swoop at me;
- 22 And I was in that place, or so did seem,  
where Ganymede was torn from friends away,  
up to the synod of the gods supreme.
- 25 'Perchance this bird strikes here,' I seemed to say,  
'only by habit, and from otherwhere  
scorns with his claws to carry up the prey.'
- 28 Methought then, having wheeled a little there,  
he, terrible as thunderbolt, descended  
and snatched me upward to the fiery sphere.
- 31 There he and I seemed with the burning blended,  
and so the imagined fire seemed scorching me  
that of necessity my sleep was ended.
- 34 Even as Achilles shuddered once, when he  
found himself gazing round with wakened eyes,  
not knowing in what quarter he might be,

- 37 What time his mother him, her sleeping prize,  
     from Chiron in her arms to Scyros bore,  
     whence later the Greeks took him,—in such wise
- 40 I shuddered when fled sleep away before  
     the face of me; and pallid did I stand,  
     even as a man with terror stricken shre.
- 43 My Comforter alone was near at hand;  
     the sun above two hours had made ascent,  
     and I was facing now toward the strand.
- 46 'Fear nothing,' was my Lord's admonishment.  
     'be reassured, for we are in good state;  
     relax not, but be every sinew bent.'
- 49 Now art thou come to Purgatory-gate:  
     lo, yonder the enclosing cliff, and lo  
     the entrance where it seems to separate!
- 52 At dawn of day a little while ago,  
     as slept thy soul within thee on the bed  
     of flowers that deck the meadow down below,
- 55 A Lady came, and 'I am Lucy', said;  
     'let me take up this sleeper; it is meet  
     that so he be upon his journey sped.'
- 58 With the other noble forms in that retreat  
     Sordello stayed; she took thee, and with day  
     came upward, and I came where fell her feet.
- 61 She laid thee here; that open entrance-way  
     with her fair eyes first having pointed out,  
     together then with sleep she went away.'
- 64 Like one who wins assurance after doubt,  
     and into confidence converts his fear  
     when truth is known, so did I change about;
- 67 And when my Leader saw me free from care,  
     he started up along the cliff again  
     toward the height, and I pursued him there.
- 70 Reader, thou seest how I exalt my strain,  
     and therefore do not hold it strange if by  
     more cunning art I now the theme sustain.
- 73 We reached a point, as we were drawing nigh,  
     whence what first seemed a wall that had incurred  
     a fissure, now threw open to the eye

- 25 A door, and steps beneath, first, second, third,  
for access to it, all diverse of hue,  
and a Gatekeeper who yet spoke no word.
- 29 And as I opened more mine eye thereto,  
I saw him sitting on the upper stair,  
such in the face I could not bear the view.
- 32 He held a sword whereof the blade was bare,  
which shed a sheen so dazzling to our viewing  
that oft in vain I raised my glances there.
- 35 'Stand there and tell what aim ye are pursuing;  
where is the escort?'—he began to say,  
'beware lest coming up be your undoing!'
- 38 My Master answered him: 'This very day  
a Lady of Heaven, aware how to proceed,  
bade, "Thither go, there is the entrance-way!"'
- 41 'And may she all your steps with blessing speed,'  
rejoined the Gatekeeper in courteous tone,  
'come to our stair then, as it is decreed.'
- 44 Thither we came: a great white marble stone  
was the first stair, so polished and so terse  
that in it was my very image shown.
- 47 The second, tinct of deeper hue than perse,  
was rugged rock, scorched with corrosive stain,  
and cloven through both lengthwise and traverse.
- 50 The third, which from above thrusts down amain,  
seemed to me porphyry, as luminant  
as red blood spirling from a master-vein.
- 53 Upon this last one both his feet did plant  
th' Angel of God, who sat the threshold warding,  
which seemed to me of stone of adamant.
- 56 Up the three steps, mine own good will according,  
drew me my Guide, and said: 'Humbly request  
that he unlock, admittance thus affording.'
- 59 Devoutly fell I at the footpalms blest;  
for mercy craved the opening to me;  
but first I smote me thrice upon the breast.
- 62 With sword-point he inscribed the letter P  
sevenfold upon my forehead: 'Once inside,  
take heed to wash away these wounds',—said he.

- 115 Ashes, or earth which has been digged and dried,  
     would match the hue of his habiliment,  
     and, drawn from underneath it, I descreid
- 118 Two keys, one gold, one silver instrument:  
     now with the white, then with the yellow too,  
     he plied the gate until I was content.
- 121 'Should either key the fastening not undo,  
     within the wards inadequately plying,'  
     said he to us, 'blocked is the passage through.'
- 124 More dear is one, the other one relying,  
     ere it unlock, on passing craft and wit,  
     for this one brings the knot to its untying.
- 127 Peter, who gave them, said 't were better fit,  
     when people at my feet were prostrate lain,  
     to err by opening than shutting it.'
- 130 He pushed the portal of the holy fane:  
     'Enter,' said he, 'this knowledge with you bringing,  
     whoso looks backward goes outside again.'
- 133 And when upon their sockets were set swinging  
     the pivots of that consecrated door,  
     hinges of metal stout, sonorous ringing,
- 136 Not so discordant seemed, nor did so roar  
     Tarpelia, when away from her was rended  
     the good Metellus, whence grew lean her store.
- 139 I turned away, and the first note attended:  
     *Te Deum laudamus* on mine ear was stealing  
     in voices with sweet music interblended.
- 142 Then listened I with such a raptured feeling  
     as often overcomes the soul down here,  
     when sing the people to the organ pealing,
- 145 And now the words are muffled, now ring clear.

## NOTES

ll. 1-6. The lunar Aurora appears around the constellation of the Scorpion.

ll. 10-18. The other four, having cast off the inheritance from Adam, apparently do not sleep. Dreams just before dawn are deemed prophetic or in some way true. The reference to the woes of the swallow recalls the tragic story of Procne (the nightingale) and Philomela (the swallow). Cf. Canto xvii, ll. 19-21.

l. 44. Awakening two hours after sunrise, Dante learns that his dream was indeed symbolically true.

l. 55. It will be remembered that Dante is especially devoted to Saint Lucy, as we learned from the narrative of Virgil in *Inferno* ii. She was supposed to be an embodiment of 'illuminative grace', as well as the especial patroness of those who suffered from weakness of the eyes, to which Dante's severe studies are thought to have made him subject. Indeed he himself gives an interesting account of one occasion when he so suffered (*Convivio*, iii. ix, near close).

ll. 112-14. *P* stands for Latin *peccatum*; the sins which are to be washed away are the deadly seven, from which all specific sins are supposed to spring. We are to see how, before quitting each terrace of the expiatory Mountain, one of these *P*'s vanishes from the brow of the Pilgrim at the touch of an angel wing.

ll. 118-29. The silver symbolizes the knowledge of human nature which enables the priest to judge of the genuine nature of the penitence; the golden, the power of absolution.

ll. 133-8. According to the poet Lucan, the Tarpeian rock bellowed when Caesar put aside the Tribune and violated the treasury. The reason why the door of Purgatory creaks is mentioned at the beginning of the next Canto.

The sensitive reader will not fail to feel the singular loftiness of the allegory to which the Poet expressly calls attention. The scenery wherein the falling asleep and the awakening of the Poet are framed; the imagery of the lunar Aurora in the great constellation of the Scorpion; the dim imaginations of his dream and the contrast between its seeming violence and the placid action which it shadows; then the effect of Virgil's narrative upon Dante's mind and mood—all these circumstances form a symmetrical avenue of approach, flanked by

the converging lines of the dream and its answering reality. Hitherto we have been delayed outside the Christian Acropolis, first in the plain by the seaside, then upon the lower slopes of the Mountain; now we draw near to the mystic Propyleæ. Invited by the courteous Gatekeeper, we are drawn with good will up the three symbolic steps. The first of these may be taken as an emblem of the white purity of Christ where we behold, as in an accusing mirror, the stains which we have come to purge away. The second step, dark and rough and scorched, of massive stone cracked lengthwise and acres, brings the broken and contrite heart in contact with the Cross of Christ; while perhaps the third, which seemed porphyry flaming like blood from a master vein, denotes acceptance as the part of the pilgrim of the redeeming blood of Christ. The Bird of God who sits above the threshold of adamant typifies the priest receiving confession by authority of the Church. Here should be borne in mind the Poet's explanation in his letter to Can Grande of the various ways in which his poem may be read: it has meanings literal, moral, allegorical, anagogical—now this meaning and now that one shining out, and sometimes two or three different meanings dazzling the reader with their iridescence. Thus here the threshold of adamant is a member of an architectural structure, while allegorically it refers to the solid foundation upon which Christ built the Church, morally to the steadfastness appropriate to the confession, and anagogically (as Torracca suggests) to the light of Grace. The purpose of the invocation to the reader (l. 70) is, in the light of these considerations, clear. The reader will not have failed to note how habitually Dante descends at the close of a Canto to some moral exhortation, some bitter invective, some piece of satire; and the looser the theme of the Canto the more studiously homely is the phrasing of such descent to earth. There is such a descent to the language and needs of little people (*mulierculæ*) at the close of the preceding and of the succeeding Canto. Such descents are more frequent as we go up and on. But in this Canto there is no descent, and the Poet challenges the reader not to wonder if he uses more art to support the exalted matter of his song.

## CANTO X

*The Marvellous Carved Walls*

- 1 When once within the threshold of the gate,  
   which souls disuse through evil inclination  
   to make the crooked pathway appear straight,
- 4 I felt it closed by its reverberation:  
   and if I had turned back mine eyes thereto,  
   what for the fault were fitting exculpation?
- 7 A fissured rock were we ascending through,  
   which did to this side and the other sway  
   as waves advancing and receding do.
- 10 'Now must a little skill come into play,  
   in keeping close, now here,' my Leader said,  
   'now yonder, to the side that curves away.'
- 13 So scantily our steps were making head  
   that the moon's waning disk had time thereby  
   to settle down to rest within her bed,
- 16 Before we issued from that needle's eye.  
   But when we reached a free and open land  
   above, where gathers back the mountain, I
- 19 Being weary, both uncertain on which hand  
   the way led, stopped we, not to go amiss  
   by roads more lonely than through desert sand.
- 22 From where the void borders the precipice  
   to base of the high cliff ascending sheer,  
   the human form thrice told would measure this;
- 25 And, as I winged my glances far and near,  
   now to the leftward, now toward the right,  
   still did this cornice such to me appear.
- 28 Our feet had not yet moved upon the height,  
   when that sheer cliff around us, there became  
   too steep for climbing, proved of marble white
- 31 And decked with carvings past the masterdom  
   not only of cunning Polycletus,—nay,  
   Nature herself had there been overcome.
- 34 The Angel who proclaimed on earth the sway  
   of peace long ages sighed to constitute,  
   which swept the ancient ban of Heaven away,

- 37 Before us stood with truth so absolute  
     carved in the acting of the gracious theme,  
     that it appeared to be no image mute.
- 40 You'd swear that he cried 'Hail!' for how misdeem  
     when there was imaged forth that Lady dear  
     who turned the key to open Love supreme?
- 43 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord is here!'  
     Such was the language by her mien attested,  
     clearly as figure stamped in wax is clear.
- 46 'Attend not to one part alone,' requested  
     the kindly Master who was holding me  
     on that side where the human heart is nested;
- 49 Wherewithal, my glance removing, did I see  
     next beyond Mary, and toward the Guide  
     who urged me on, another history
- 52 Set in the rock; whence, turning to that side,  
     I passed by Virgil and drew nigh alone,  
     so that it might the better be descried.
- 55 There in the living marble carved, were shown  
     the cart and kine the holy ark that drew,  
     whereby we fear an office not our own.
- 58 People were grouped about the foreground, who,  
     in seven choirs, made my two senses say,  
     one, 'They sing not,' the other, 'Yes, they do.'
- 61 And likewise, where the marble did portray  
     the smoke of incense, eyes and nostrils bore  
     discordant witness both of yea and nay.
- 64 The lowly Psalmist, high-girt, on before  
     the sacred vessel, bounded in the dance,  
     and, doing so, was less than king and more.
- 67 Michal was figured, looking on askance  
     from window of great palace opposite,  
     perturbed and scornful in her countenance.
- 70 From there the movement of my feet was slight  
     till I could scan another tale anigh,  
     which, beyond Michal, gleamed upon me white.
- 73 Herein was historied the glory high  
     of the princely Roman who, beneficent,  
     moved Gregory to his great victory:

- 5 Trajan, the emperor, hereby is meant;  
 and a poor widow to his bridle clung  
 in attitude of grief and of lament.
- 6 He seemed to ride with many a knight, among  
 a trampling throng; eagles of golden hue  
 above him streaming to the wind seemed flung.
- 7 'Avenge me, Sire!'—amid that retinue  
 appeared that wretched mother to implore,  
 'for my slain son my heart is stricken through.'
- 8 'Be patient,' answered her the Emperor,  
 'till my return.' And she, with urgent moan  
 replied: 'How, Sire, if thou return no more?'
- 9 Then he: 'Whoso shall sit upon my throne  
 will do it.' And she: 'What boot shall be to thee  
 another's bounty, if thou stint thine own?'
- 10 'Now be thou comforted,' consented he,  
 'for ere I go my duty must I do,  
 so Justice wills, pity restraining me.'
- 11 That Being who can look on nothing new  
 produced that visible speech engraven yon,  
 unknown here, therefore novel to our view.
- 12 While I delighted me to look upon  
 these portraits of humility so fair  
 and dear, considering Who this had done,
- 13 'Lo, many people, but with footsteps rare,'  
 murmured the Poet, 'on this side of us;  
 these will direct us to the lofty stair.'
- 14 Mine eyes, that were intent on gazing thus,  
 turned round toward him, loath to be delayed,  
 to see new objects still solicitous.
- 15 I would not have thee, Reader, shrink dismayed  
 from thy good purpose, though thou come to know  
 how God ordains it that the debt be paid.
- 16 Take heed not to the fashion of the woe;  
 think on what follows; at the worst take thought  
 beyond the Judgement Day it cannot go.
- 17 'Master,' began I, 'what I see seems not  
 persons approaching us with motions slight,  
 but sight is so at fault, I know not what.'

- 115 And he replied to me: 'So dire a plight  
doubles them down with punishment condign,  
that I could not at first believe my sight.
- 118 But closely look till vision disentwine  
what yonder comes beneath those boulders bent,  
already canst thou see how all repine.'
- 121 O ye proud Christians, wretched and forspent,  
infirm in vision of your inward eyes,  
who in backsliding steps are confident,
- 124 Perceive ye not how we from worms arise  
to form the fair angelic butterfly  
which unto judgement undefended flies?
- 127 Why is the spirit in you puffed on high,  
since ye are ungrown insects at your best,  
defective grubs that undeveloped die!
- 130 As ceiling or roof timbers often rest  
on corbels, carved to indicate the strain  
in figure quaint, contorting knee to breast,—
- 133 Whence out of the unreal, real pain  
is bred in him who looks,—beneath such stress  
did I see these, on giving heed again.
- 136 True is it, they were bowed down more and less  
as more or less upon their backs they bore,  
and he whose look seemed most to acquiesce,
- 139 Weeping, did seem to say: 'I can no more!'

## NOTES

*Second day: middle of the forenoon. On the first of the seven terraces, that where the Sin of Pride is expiated.*

ll. 1-12. The hinges creak, therefore, because 'strait is the gate, and few there be that find it'; and the symbolism is sustained by the loneliness of the way upon which they enter. In the narrow pass where the walls undulate, the Poets are careful to go straight ahead. 'The evil love of souls which makes the crooked way seem straight', implies familiarity with the Poet's belief, to be fully developed later, that all actions, good or bad, are prompted by love of the good.

ll. 17-33. The mountain 'gathers back' leaving a terrace or 'cornice', as wide as three lengths of the human body, projecting from the upright cliff, whose marble surface is carven with wonderful figures speaking thrillingly of the vice or its anti-thetical virtue, so that the sensitive observer feels each picture to be either a *check* or a *goad*. In fact, on every one of the seven successive shelves of the purgatorial hill, this system of incitements to the virtue, or bridles to the vicious disposition, is in various ways enforced. It is to be noted that the first example of the virtue is invariably from some episode in the life of the Virgin Mary.

ll. 34 ff. This first subject, as described in the first chapter of the gospel of Luke, has of course been since the time of Dante a favourite one with painters. Almost every one of the great masters has made a lovely picture of the Annunciation.

ll. 55-7. 2 Samuel vi. 3-7.

ll. 64-9. 2 Samuel vi. 12-16.

l. 75. It was believed that Trajan was removed from Hell and redeemed in answer to the prayers of Gregory the Great. Cf. the great place given to the just Emperor in *Paradiso* xx.

ll. 94-105. Dante knows well that the plastic arts cannot tell a story, much less pronounce a dialogue, and therefore pauses to remind us that this 'visible speech', so novel and strange to us, is produced by Him to whom the strangest novelties 'are but dressings of a former sight'.

ll. 106-20. Dante attributes to the reader that Sin of Pride which he acknowledges to have been his own (as will appear later). The exhortation is doubtless addressed to himself as much as to the reader. The gradual way in which these obscure figures are perceived is very significant. These person-

ages who in life were 'the observed of all observers' are now 'quite, quite down'. There is deep intention too in the carry-over of this episode from this Canto to the next. Another marked example of this exceptional handling is seen in the story of Ugolino which is likewise introduced at the end of the Canto (*Inferno* xxxii).

ll. 130-9. Just as the caryatids of the Erechtheum (or the living caryatids whom one sees to-day in Italy) give pleasure by appealing to our sense of beauty, so these bended and contorted figures give pain. But if so, how much more the pain to see examples of the long expiation which we ourselves are doomed to suffer!

## CANTO XI

*The Proud made Humble*

- 1 'Our Father, Thou who dwellest high in Heaven,  
not circumscribed, save by the Love immense  
that to Thy first creation Thou hast given,  
2 Praised be Thy name and Thy omnipotence  
by all created beings, emulous  
to render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.  
3 Let peace from Thine own kingdom come to us,  
for with all reach of soul that in us lies  
we cannot win it, if it come not thus.  
4 As Thine own holy angels sacrifice  
their will to Thee, while they Hosannah sing,  
so let men do with penitential sighs.  
5 This day to us our daily manna bring,  
for in this desert rough, in utter dearth,  
we backward go when most endeavouring.  
6 As we forgive to every one on earth  
the wrongs we bore, so graciously do Thou  
forgive us, and look not upon our worth.  
7 Put not to proof before our ancient foe  
our power of will, so easily undone,  
but liberate from him who spurs it so.  
8 We make, dear Lord, this final orison  
not for ourselves, because there is no need,  
but all for dear ones left behind us yon.  
9 Beseeching for themselves and us good speed,  
those heavy-laden shades went their slow way  
under such loads as oft from dreams proceed,  
10 And with unequal anguish circled they  
wearily that first cornice of the Hill,  
purging the soilure of the world away.  
11 If good for us be spoken yonder still,  
what may be done and said for them down here  
by those who have a good root to their will?  
12 Surely we ought to give them aid to clear  
the stains they carried hence, that light and chaste  
they issue forth upon the starry sphere.

- 254                  *Humbert, Count of Santaflora*
- 37 'Ah, so may justice and may pity haste  
    to disemburden you and speed your wing  
    whither your heart's desire is wholly graced,
- 40 Tell us which passage to the stair may bring  
    us soonest; and if more than one there be,  
    show that where least is need of clambering;
- 43 For in the flesh of Adam comes with me  
    this person, by the burden so oppressed  
    that, although willing, he mounts charily.'
- 46 The answer to these words, wherewith addressed  
    those weary souls my Leader and my Friend,  
    came back, from whom was yet not manifest;
- 49 But it was said: 'If to the right ye wend  
    with us along the cliff, ye shall be shown  
    a passage where the living could ascend.
- 52 And if I were not hampered by the stone  
    taming my neck, erewhile imperious,  
    so that perforce I hold my visage down,
- 55 Then would I scan that one, not named to us  
    but still alive, to see if him I knew,  
    and make him of this burden piteous.
- 58 To a great Tuscan Sirc my birth is due,  
    William Aldobrandesco: I know not  
    whether his name was ever known to you.
- 61 My ancient blood, and prowess that wrought  
    my forebears, swelled my arrogance so  
    that, of our common mother losing thought,
- 64 I felt disdain for every man below,  
    and died of it, as know the Sienese  
    and every child in Campagnatico.
- 67 Humbert am I; nor harmed my haughtiness  
    me only, but all those my kinsmen bred  
    are dragged in consequence to deep distress.
- 70 And here I cannot choose but bow my head  
    beneath this load till satisfied be Grace,—  
    since not alive I did it, with the dead.'
- 73 Listening to him, I bended down my face;  
    and one of them beneath the weight they brook  
    (not he who spoke) twisted himself apace

- 76 And saw me and recognized and called, his look,  
albeit with effort, at my figure aimed  
which going withal their crouching posture took.
- 79 'Art thou not Oderisi,'—I exclaimed,  
'glory of Gubbio for that art of thine  
in Paris now "illuminating" named?'
- 82 'Brother,' said he, 'the leaves more smiling shine  
by Franco of Bologna's brush made fair:  
his now is all the boast, eclipsing mine.'
- 85 I had not been so courteous over there  
while living, for the yearning strong in me  
for excellence, which was my utmost care.
- 88 Here of such pride is paid the penalty;  
and had I not, while free to sin, been fain  
to turn to God, even here I should not be.
- 91 O glory of the human powers, how vain,  
how little green may at the top endure,  
unless rude after-ages supervene!
- 94 In painting Cimabuë held secure  
the field, and now is Giotto in request,  
so that the other's fame is grown obscure.
- 97 So did one Guido from the other wrest  
the palm in language; there may be, who knows?  
one born to drive both eagles from the nest.
- 100 Worldly renown is windy breath that goes  
now hither and now yon, and changes name  
according to the quarter whence it blows.
- 103 If old thou strip thy flesh, shall then thy fame  
be much more glorious than hadst thou died  
while pap and prattle still thy lips became,
- 106 A thousand years to come? a briefer tide  
to all eternity, than wink of eye  
to circle round the Heaven most slowly plied.
- 109 With him who little road doth occupy  
before me, rang all Tuscany of yore,  
though few for him now in Siena sigh
- 112 Where he was master once, and overbore  
the rabidness of Florence, prostitute  
at present, even as she was proud before.

- 115 As colour of the grass is your repute  
     which comes and goes; He makes it yellow and ~~sete~~  
     who summons from the earth the greening fruit.'
- 118 And I: 'Thy truthful words make lowlier  
     my spirit, and abate my swelling pride:  
     but who is he of whom thou spakest here?'
- 121 'That? Provenzan Salvani,' he replied,  
     'put here because presumptuous to hold  
     all Siena underfoot. So since he died
- 124 Has he been going, and ever as of old  
     unresting goes; with such coin he atones  
     who in the other life has been too bold.'
- 127 And I: 'If every spirit who postpones  
     repentance till he reach life's utmost rim  
     cannot, unaided by good orisons,
- 130 Ascend the Mount, but must an interim  
     equal to all his life remain below,—  
     how has the coming been vouchsafed to him?'
- 133 And he: 'When living in the greatest show,  
     upon the Campo of Siena fain  
     was he to stand and all respect forgo:
- 136 For, wishing to deliver from the pain  
     of Charles's prison house, a friend, he there  
     compelled himself to quake in every vein.
- 139 I say no more, of darkling words aware;  
     but shortly will thy neighbours bring about  
     that thou the pregnant comment canst prepare!
- 142 This action from those limits let him out.'

## NOTES

*The scene, as in the preceding Canto, is on the lowest shelf or cornice of the Mountain; time, before noon of the second day in Purgatory.*

ll. 22 ff. The prayer 'Deliver us from the Evil One' is no longer needed, but is made for us who are still subject to fall. How then should we remember them when we pray!

ll. 46-8. The great personage who replies to Virgil's adjuration is so crushed down under the expiatory stone that he is hardly noticeable, even to Dante's quick eye.

ll. 59-66. Once one of those great counts of Santafiora mentioned in Canto vi. They boasted of having a castle for every day in the year. The Aldobrandeschi were known at least as widely throughout Europe, probably, as the Malaspina, whose fame is celebrated at the close of Canto viii. Therefore the humility expressed in l. 60 may seem somewhat exaggerated. It must be remembered that Humbert is only in process of purgation of the most insidious of all dispositions. Of all evil tendencies, that of Pride is the only one of which the victim is proud. The acquirement of the habit of humility will be gradual, and its expression is at first bound to be dogged by the shadow of affectation. How Pia died he knows—he only who espoused her. How I, Humbert, died, is known throughout the great state of Siena, and to every child in Campagnatico (where he was assassinated)! The pride is unconscious; the humility conscious, because conscientious.

ll. 82-7. Another example of the difficulty of acquiring the habit of humility. He professes to believe Franco his superior in his art, but immediately afterwards takes it back!

ll. 91-3. The famous man is like a tree withering at the top, and therefore soon cast into the shade by taller shafts of fresh growth, except in the event that seasons of decadence set in when the stunted tree still remains conspicuous.

ll. 94-9. Cimabue, older than Dante by some twenty-five years, died in the year of the Poet's exile. Giotto, a year or two younger than Dante, outlived him by sixteen years. The examples of literary celebrity are Guido Guinizelli, whom we shall meet in Canto xxvi, and Guido Cavalcanti, whose father we met in *Inferno* x. The third poet is doubtless Dante himself. With delicate self-betrayal he thus illustrates that he was not exempt from 'that last infirmity of noble mind'.

ll. 108. The circle that turns in Heaven most slowly is that of

the fixed stars, whose sphere was computed to revolve at the rate of one degree in a century.

*ll. 109 ff.* The lord of the splendid city of Siena at the time of the signal defeat of the Florentine Guelfs at Montaperti (1260).

*ll. 127-38.* Dante desires to be informed why, in the case of Provenzano Salvani, an exception has been made to the rule under which we have seen Buonconte and sad Pia wandering on the lower slopes, awaiting the hour for beginning penance. It was because of a dramatic display of humility which greatly struck the medieval imagination. One of his friends having assisted Conrardin, the last unhappy Hohenstaufen, was flung into prison by the conquering Charles of Anjou and a huge ransom demanded. Unable to raise the sum in any other way, Provenzano posted himself as a mendicant upon the civic centre of Siena, the noble oval Campo or Piazza, which is still so unmodernized that little imagination is required to revive the scene.

*ll. 139 ff.* Dante is also to know what it means to depend upon the charity of strangers.

## CANTO XII

*The Pictured Floor*

- 1 Abreast, like oxen going in a yoke,  
I with that heavy-laden soul went on,  
by the kind Teacher's leave. But when he spoke:
- 4 Now it behoves us leave him and be gone;  
to ply the bark with sail and oar is best  
here, far as possible, for every one.'
- 7 Upright, prepared for walking, I redressed  
my body, howsoever inwardly  
my thoughts remained both lowly and depressed.
- I had moved on, and followed willingly  
the footsteps of my Master, and so fleet  
we went as showed us light of foot to be,
- 3 When said he: 'Cast thine eyes down; it is meet,  
in order well the pathway to beguile,  
to look upon the bed beneath thy feet.'
- 6 As, that their memory remain awhile,  
earth-level tombs above the buried show  
the carven traces of their former style,
- 9 Whence tears for them there often freshly flow  
through pricking of remembrances, that stir  
only the tender-hearted: even so
- 2 Beheld I, but of semblance goodlier  
there, in accordance with the Workman's worth,  
figured the way along that mountain-spur.
- 5 I saw on one side him of nobler birth  
than any other creature, swift as light  
fall like a thunderbolt from Heaven to Earth.
- 8 I saw Briareus, smitten by the bright  
celestial dart, with chill of death subdued,  
heavy upon the ground there opposite.
- 1 I saw Thymbraeus, Pallas, Mars, who stood  
in armour round their Father, and they were  
gazing at members of the Giants strewed.
- 4 I saw, at foot of his great labour, stare  
bewildered Nimrod, where on Shinar plain  
lay those who with him had been haughty there.

- 37 O Niobe, with eyes how full of pain,  
portrayed upon the path I saw thee too,  
between thy seven and seven children slain!
- 40 O Saul, how on your proper sword did you  
there lifeless upon Mount Gilboa show,  
that felt thereaster neither rain nor dew!
- 43 O mad Arachne, I beheld thee so,  
half spider, wretched on the ruin wrought  
upon the web thou wovest to thy woe!
- 46 O Rehoboam, here thy form does not  
appear to threaten, but fulfilled with fear,  
snatched from pursuers by a chariot!
- 49 Showed the hard pavement, too, what guerdon ~~dew~~  
Alcmeon made unto his mother once  
the ill-predestined ornament appear;
- 52 Showed how upon Sennacherib the sons  
fell in the temple, where, when he was slain,  
they left him without any orisons;
- 55 Showed how great ruin and what cruel pain  
wrought Tomyris, when she to Cyrus said:  
'Thy thirst for blood with blood I slake again!'
- 58 Showed how in panic the Assyrians fled  
as soon as Holofernes was undone,  
and showed the remnants of that victim dead.
- 61 I saw in caves and ashes Ilion:  
O Troy, thy state how low and pitiful  
showed in the sculptured imagery yon!
- 64 What Master could with brush or graving-tool  
those lines and shades so dexterly have bestowed,  
to make the cleverest wit cry 'Wonderful'?
- 67 The dead seemed dead, alive the living showed:  
better than I, saw not who saw the true,  
all that I trod while bent above my road.
- 70 Now lift your haughty looks, insolent crew  
of sons of Eve, nor glance ye at the ground  
to see the wicked way that ye pursue!
- 73 More of the mount by us was circled round,  
and the sun's course now far more nearly spent,  
than deemed my spirit, which was not unbound.

- 76 When he who ever vigilantly went  
before me, 'Lift thy head,' began to say,  
'the time is past for going thus intent.'
- 79 Lo! yonder is an Angel in array  
to come toward us: lo! returning seen  
the sixth handmaid from service of the day.
- 82 Adorn with reverence thine act and mien,  
that he may gladly speed our way on high:  
think that this day will never dawn again.'
- 85 Well wonted to his monishing was I,  
on no account to squander time; and thus  
he could not on that theme speak covertly.
- 88 Toward us came the being beauteous,  
vested in raiment white, and in his face  
such as appears the dawn-star tremulous.
- 91 His wings he opened, opened his embrace,  
bidding: 'Approach, for hard by is the stair,  
and from henceforward ye ascend apace.'
- 94 To these glad tidings the response is rare:  
born to soar up, why are ye overthrown,  
O human race, at every puff of air?'
- 97 He led us to where cloven was the stone;  
here with his wings did on my forehead smite  
then promised me secure the going on.
- 100 As beyond Rubaconte, to the right,  
where sits the temple built to overlook  
the well-directed city, the sharp flight
- 103 Of that ascent less pantingly we brook  
by means of stairways fashioned in the days  
safe for the bushel and the audit-book;
- 106 So here the mountainside a little stays  
its dizzy drop from the succeeding round,  
but high rocks either side the pathway graze.
- 109 As we are turning thither, voices sound,  
'Blessed the poor in spirit!'—sweet concord  
such that to tell it words could not be found.
- 112 Ah me, these entrances how different  
from that Infernal! for with anthems here  
one enters,—there below with wild lament.

bridge at Florence, in modern times called Ponte alle Grazie. After leaving the bridge, one first turns a little way to the left and then to the right, in order to reach the foot of the steep flight of steps leading to San Miniato—built before the public accounts and standards of measure were tampered with. If indeed the convenient steps by which people ascend there to-day be the same as those made in the good old time, all Dante's difficult mountain climbing is now over. As for the public scandals referred to: (1) A certain salt commissioner had enriched himself by taking a stave out of the measure with which he dealt out the commodity to the people. To the family of this gentleman any reference to the bushel was thereafter painful. See *Paradiso* xvi. 105. (2) As to the 'audit-book', a member of the great Acciaiuoli family had torn a leaf out of the municipal record in order to conceal a false entry.

ll. 118-36. The touch of the Angel's wing had erased or symbolic P from the Poet's brow.

## CANTO XIII

*Sapia of Siena*

- 1 We now were at the summit of the stair,  
there where the mount that heals as one ascends  
is cut away the second time. And there  
2 A terrace round about the hillside trends  
in the same manner as the former one,  
save that more suddenly its contour bends.  
3 Shaded or graven form appeared there none:  
so bare the bank, and so the pathway showed  
with but the livid colour of the stone.  
4 'If to inquire of people we abode  
still here,' the Poet said, 'I fear perchance  
it would too much delay our choice of road.'  
5 Then fixing on the sun a steady glance,  
and centring his movement on the right,  
he caused his left side round it to advance.  
6 'O Thou, confiding in whose kindly light  
I enter the new pathway, lead,' he said,  
'for leading here within is requisite.  
7 The world thou warmest, lamping overhead;  
if other reason urge not, by thy smile  
we ought forever to be onward led.'  
8 As far as here we reckon for a mile,  
so far there did we on our journey move  
by dint of ready will, in little while;  
9 And tow'rd us were heard flying thereabove  
spirits invisible, with courteous  
persuasion, bidding to the board of Love.  
10 The first voice that went flying onward thus,  
with loud proclaim cried out: 'No wine have they,  
repeating it long after passing us.  
11 And ere, far off, it wholly died away,  
I heard another that was flying by,  
'I am Orestes,'—nor did this one stay.  
12 'O Father mine, what voices these?' said I;  
and while I questioned, did a third one urge,  
'Love him that uses you despitefully.'

- 37 And he: 'This round doth castigating purge  
the sin of Envy, and from Love sublime  
are therefore drawn the lashes of the scourge.'
- 40 The curb must needs be of a counter-chime,  
and thou wilt hear it, if I well surmise,  
or ever thou the Pass of Pardon climb.
- 43 But through the air intently fix thine eyes,  
and thou shalt see along this avenue  
people, all sitting where the rocks arise.'
- 46 Then opened wider than before my view,  
taking in shades in front, with mantles on  
that did not differ from the stone in hue.
- 49 And when we had a little farther gone,  
I heard a moaning: 'Mary, for us pray!'  
to Michael and Peter and all the saints a moan.
- 52 I cannot think there walks the earth to-day  
a man so hard as not to have been stung  
with pity at what I saw beside the way:
- 55 For when I drew so nearly them among  
that all their actions became manifest,  
out through mine eyes full bitter tears were wrung.
- 58 In haircloth mean I seemed to see them dressed;  
each lent his shoulder unto him behind,  
and all supported by the cliff did rest.
- 61 Thus at indulgences the poor and blind  
to crave their needment by the portal wait,  
each with his head upon the next reclined,
- 64 That others may be made compassionate  
not by the sound of words alone so soon  
as by their looks that no less supplicate.
- 67 As profits not the blind the sun at noon,  
so to the shades who sat where I have said,  
the light of Heaven will not confer its boon;
- 70 For pierces all their lids an iron thread,  
and sews them up, as to a savage hawk  
is done, since it will not be quieted.
- 73 Methought it unbecoming so to walk  
beholding others while concealed from view;  
whence turned I, with my counsel sage to talk.

- 76 What the mute wished to utter, well he knew,  
     whence did he not my questioning abide,  
         but said: 'Speak to the point; let words be few.'
- 79 Virgil was walking with me on that side  
     whence one may fall, because a parapet  
         to girdle round the terrace is denied.
- 82 Upon the other side of me were set  
     the pious shades, who through the suture dread  
         strained forth the tears until their cheeks were wet.
- 85 To them I turned me, and, beginning, said:  
     'O people sure to see the lofty Glow  
         whereto your longing thoughts are wholly led,
- 88 May Grace soon loosen all the soilure so  
     from off your conscience, that descending clear  
         through it the stream of memory may flow,
- 91 Tell me, for welcome will it be and dear,  
     if soul Italian here among you be;  
         it might be well for him that I should hear.'
- 94 'Citizens all, O brother mine, are we  
     of one true city; but be this thy word,—  
         one who a pilgrim dwelt in Italy.'
- 97 By way of answer, this, methought, I heard  
     a little farther on than where I stood;  
         whence I directed me yet thitherward.
- 100 Among the others there, one shadow showed  
     a waiting look; should any ask 'How so?'  
         it listed up its chin in blind man's mode.
- 103 'O soul, subdued that thou mayst upward go,'  
     said I, 'if thou it be that answerest,  
         vouchsafe that I thy name or country know.'
- 106 'I was a Sienese, and with the rest,'  
     she answered, 'here I cleanse my life unfit,  
         weeping to Him to come and make us blest.'
- 109 Sapient was I not, though named of it  
     Sapia; greeting with far greater glee  
         another's bane than mine own benefit.
- 112 And that thou think me not deceiving thee,  
     hear whether I was foolish as I tell  
         what time the years were sloping down with me.

- 115 One day the men who in my country dwell  
joined battle near to Colle with their foes,  
while I was praying God for what besell.
- 118 Routed were they, and felt the bitter woes  
of fugitives; beyond comparison  
my joy, on witnessing the chase, arose:
- 121 So that I lifted my bold face thereon,  
crying to God, 'I fear Thee not from hence!'  
as doth the blackbird for a little sun.
- 124 At utmost verge of my expiring sense  
I yearned for peace with God; nor would I be  
even yet discharged of debt by penitence,
- 127 Had it not been that, out of charity  
grieving, with supplications holiest,  
Pier Pettinagno still remembered me.
- 130 But who art thou that comest making quest  
about our state, with unimpeded eye  
as I believe, and breathing reasonest?
- 133 'Mine eyes will be withheld,' I made reply,  
'but briefly here, for small offence done when  
with Envy they were yonder turned awry.'
- 136 My spirit, too expectant of the pain  
they suffer underneath, is terrified;  
that load already weighs on me amain.'
- 139 And she to me: 'Who then hath been thy guide  
up here among us, if return is meet?'  
'He with me who is silent,' I replied;
- 142 'And living am I; whence do thou entreat  
of me, O chosen soul, wouldst have me yon  
yet move in thy behalf my mortal feet.'
- 145 'O strange is this to hear!'—she said thereon,  
'and of God's love to thee a happy sign;  
whence aid me sometime with thine orison.'
- 148 And I implore by most desire of thine,  
if thou shalt tread the Tuscan earth anew,  
that thou make good my fame with kindred mine.
- 151 Seck them among that futile people, who  
place hope in Talamonë, forgoing  
more hope than when the Dian they pursue;
- 154 But the admirals will lose a greater thing.'

## NOTES

early afternoon of second day. Terrace of the Envious, who are sitting along the cliff with eyes scived up as falconers used to 'seel' the eyes of wild hawks. Here the whips and checks are no longer appeals to the eye, but are voices recalling famous instances.

l. 29. Mary at the marriage at Cana.

l. 32. Pylades, wishing to die for his friend.

ll. 37-42. The Envious are scourged by voices of unselfish love. The bridle or curb to Envy is found voiced at the close of Canto xiv. The Pass of Pardon is the easier stairway to the next terrace above, where the first accents they hear are the gentle and forgiving ones of Mary and Pisistratus (Canto xv).

ll. 61-6. The services at the churches where indulgences could be obtained were, by a natural metonymy, called *erdomi* or *perdonanze*—pardons or indulgences. Thither flocked beggars—the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind—to sit before the church-doors in disconsolate array raving charity of those whose hearts were melted by the warmth of Divine Grace.

ll. 94-6. No dividing lines of race or tongue or land or colour.

l. 114. Life is here compared to an arch: at about the age of thirty-five one reaches the summit and then begins to descend. For the elaboration of this image, see the *Convivio* (Banquet), v. 23. Cf. *Inferno* i. 1.

ll. 115-17. Here in 1269, nine years after their crushing defeat at Montaperti, the Florentine Guelphs had their revenge. This defeat of her own countryman, Provenzano, was what the envious woman prayed for. Cf. close of Canto xi.

l. 123. The story goes that the merle comes out some fine midwinter day, singing: 'Lord I take no heed of thee, for winter is past.'

l. 129. Peter the comb-maker, so unusually honest as to be still remembered in Siena.

ll. 133-8. Dante confesses that his besetting sin is pride.

ll. 151 ff. Talamonē was a malarial seaport which the Sienese tried to develop; the Dian, an underground stream, they tried to tap. The Sienese 'admirals' are like those of Switzerland. For other references to this fascinating city, see Cantos v and xi, and *Inferno* xxix.

## CANTO XIV

*Degeneracy of Tuscany and the Romagna*

- 1 Who is this that, ere Death have given him wing,  
doth circling round about our Mountain go,  
shutting his eyes at will, and opening?"
- 4 'I know not who he is, but he, I know,  
is not alone: ask thou, who art more nigh,  
and greet him gently, that he answer so.'
- 7 Thus, leaning each to each, held colloquy  
two spirits, sitting on the right hand there;  
then, to address me, with the face on high,
- 10 One said: 'O soul, that dost already fare  
heavenward, nor dost the body yet resign,  
for charity console us, and declare
- 13 Who art thou and whence come; for so divine  
a miracle, as never known before,  
must needs appear to us this grace of thine.'
- 16 And I: 'Through Tuscan mid-interior  
a river, born in Falterona-ground,  
wanders in course of hundred miles and more.'
- 19 This body bring I from that river-bound:  
to tell you who I am were speech in vain,  
because my name does not yet far resound.'
- 22 Then he who first had spoken said again:  
'Thou speakst of Arno, if I picture well  
the colour of thy sense within my brain.'
- 25 Whereto the other: 'Why did he not tell  
the very word we know that river by,  
but keep it back as something horrible?'
- 28 And the shadow that was questioned made reply:  
'I know not, but indeed 'tis fitting for  
the very name of such a vale to die.'
- 31 For from its fountain,—where the waters pour  
so amply from that rugged mountain chain  
torn from Pelorus, seldom teeming more,
- 34 As far as where it renders up again  
that which the heaven absorbs from out the flood,  
wherfrom the rivers have their flowing train,—

- 37 Virtue is driven like a serpent brood,  
the enemy of all, or through mischance  
of place, or scourge of evil habitude.
- 40 Whence so disnatur'd are the habitants  
of that unhappy vale, it would appear  
that Circe had them in her maintenance.
- 43 Among foul hogs, of acorns worthier  
than other viands made for use of men,  
it first directs its puny thoroughfare:
- 46 Curs it encounters, coming downward then,  
more snarling than their power gives warranty,  
and turns from them its muzzle in disdain;
- 49 The more it flows on downward swellingly,  
the more the dogs grown wolves are found by this  
accursed ditch of evil destiny,
- 52 Which then, descending many a deep abyss,  
finds fraudulent foxes such as do not fear  
to be entrapped by any artifice.
- 55 Nor do I curb my tongue lest others hear:  
and good for this man to remember well  
the things true prophecy is making clear.
- 58 I see thy grandson, who becomes a fell  
hunter of those wolf-creatures, terror giving  
to all who by the cruel river dwell.
- 61 He traffics in their flesh while it is living,  
then slaughters them as would a wild-beast hoar;  
many of life, himself of praise bereaving.
- 64 From the grim wood he issues red with gore,  
leaving it such not thousand years will show  
that river-bank rewooded as before.'
- 67 As at announcement of impending woe,  
the hearer's face betrays his troubled mood,  
from wheresoever peril threaten; so
- 70 I saw in the other soul, in attitude  
to listen, signs of grief and perturbation  
when that prophetic word he understood.
- 73 The words of the one, the other's agitation  
made me desire to know the names they bore;  
whereof I made request, with supplication.

- 76 Thereat the spirit that spoke to me before,  
     began again: 'Thou wilt not do the same  
         favour to me that thou art craving for;  
 79 But if God will that forth in thee should flame  
         such grace, I will not as a niggard do:  
             know then, Guido del Duca is my name.  
 82 So Envy did the blood of me imbue,  
         that, had I seen a man grow joyful there,  
             thou wouldest have seen me tinged with livid hu  
 85 From my own sowing reap I such a tare:  
         whyl set your hearts, O human progeny,  
             on what ye are permitted not to share?  
 88 This is Rinier, of the house of Calboli  
         the glory and the honour; from their blood  
             has sprung no heir of his nobility.  
 91 'Twixt Po and mountain, Reno and the flood,  
         his family is not the only race  
             stripped of integrity and gentlehood;  
 94 For in these bounds replete is every place  
         with poisonous scions, so that late and slow  
             could ever tilth eradicate their trace.  
 97 Henry Mainardi and good Lizio,  
         Pier Traversar', Guy di Carpigna, where  
             be they, O Romagnoles, who bastard grow?  
 100 When will Bologna now a Fabbro bear?  
         Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco when?  
             of humble family the noble heir.  
 103 Tuscan, let not my tears amaze thee then,  
         when Guy da Prata I recall to mind,  
             with Hugh of Azzo as he lived with men,  
 106 And Frederick Tignoso and his kind,  
         the Traversara, the Anastagi (those  
             two houses in their lineage declined!),  
 109 The knights and ladies, labour and repose,  
         that kindled in us love and courtesy,  
             where every human heart so wicked grows.  
 112 O Brettinoro, why dost thou not flee,  
         seeing that, not to be corrupted, go  
             many to exile with thy family?

- 115 Well does Bagnacaval being barren so,  
but Castrocaro ill, and bent to spawn  
such breed of counts, still worse does Conio.
- 118 Will do well the Pagani, when is gone  
their Demon from them; but not so that pure  
can ever the report of them live on.
- 121 O Hugh of Fantolini, now secure  
thy name is, which no fear may entertain  
of sons degenerating to obscure!
- 124 Now, Tuscan, go thy way, for I am fain  
rather to weep than our discourse pursue,  
so has it left my spirit wrung with pain.'
- 127 That those dear souls could hear when we withdrew,  
we were aware; and therefore confident  
their silence made us of the avenue.
- 130 When we became alone, as on we went,  
a voice came counter to us that did say,  
even as when lightning cleaves the firmament:
- 133 'Every one that findeth me, shall slay';  
all of a sudden therupon it passed,  
as thunder with the storm-rack rolls away.
- 136 Soon as our ears had truce from such a blast,  
behold another of so loud a tone,  
it seemed the thunderclap that follows fast:
- 139 'I am Aglauros, who became a stone!'  
Backward instead of forward, at that sound  
I stepped, and pressed the Poet hard upon.
- 142 Now was the air grown quiet all around;  
and he to me: 'That was the galling bit  
which ought to keep a man within his bound.
- 145 But ye accept the baited hook, and it  
draws you toward the Adversary old,  
whence curb or call doth little benefit.
- 148 The Heavens are calling to you, and unfold  
their never-fading beauties to your view  
which ever fixed upon the earth ye hold;
- 151 Whence the All-seeing One is scourging you.'

## NOTES

*The Terrace of the Envious: mid-afternoon, second day. The spirits sitting along the cliff as in the preceding Canto.*  
 Speakers: Guido del Duca, Rinieri da Calboli.

ll. 16-54. Course of the Arno from its mountain source to the sea, Falterona being the mountain at the head of the poetic valley of Casentino. Indeed to Dante the map of Italy is everywhere material for poetry. Of his especial love for the rivers of Italy we have already had many examples. Here indeed there is indignation and scorn, as almost always when he refers to Florence, but we plainly perceive his wrath to be the grief of an injured lover. Some readers may be interested to compare Spenser's sweet and leisurely enumeration of the rivers of England and Ireland (*Faerie Queene*, IV. xi).

ll. 31-3. The Apennines, interrupted by the strait of Messina, may be considered to be continued in Sicily by the range now called the Peloritan (from Pelorus). The region of Falterona and Casentino, then well wooded and well watered, has become, owing to deforestation, rather dry. Heavy rains, like that described in Canto v, were then more common.

l. 43. Porciano.

l. 46. Arezzo.

l. 50. Florence. The Florentines are again called wolves in *Paradiso* xxv. 6.

l. 53. Pisa.

ll. 58-66. The ferocious Podestà (chief magistrate) of Florence in the first year of Dante's exile. Here of course the language is wholly figurative. Since the Florentines are wolves, the city itself becomes a grim wood containing their dens.

ll. 86-7. These lines are text for a noble lesson in the next canto.

ll. 88-123. Dante considered all these names, like those in *Paradiso* xvi, 'on fame's eternal bede-roll worthy to be filed'. Doubtless they are as worthy of remembrance as the great, or the near-great, who bulk big in our biographical dictionaries, which are a recent invention. Unfortunately our knowledge as to *Who was Who* in those days is in many cases virtually limited to what the Poet himself chooses to set down. Those who desire to know more of the deeds and lives of these forgotten worthies are referred to Toynbee's entertaining *Dante Dictionary*.

I. 91. The Romagna, bounded by Po, Reno, Apennine, Adriatic.

II. 112-17. The counts who formerly ruled Brettinoro (near Forlì) and Bagnacavallo (near Ravenna), have left no heirs, and it would be better if the same were true of those of Cunio (near Imola) and Castrocaro (near Forlì).

I. 118. This human demon ought to be remembered for his sonorous name: Maghinardo Pagani da Susinana. He was lord of Faenza and Imola. Dante gives him three lines in *Inferno* xxvii (49-51).

I. 133. Cain.

I. 139. Apparently for coveting her sister's handsome lover.

I. 143. The bridle-bit or check-rein of Canto xiii, I. 40.

## CANTO XV

*Treasure in Heaven: Visions of Forbearance*

- 1 As much as shows, between the dawn of day  
and when the third hour closes, of the sphere  
that like a child is evermore at play,
- 4 So much seemed left the sun of his career  
toward the night, remaining to be run:  
there it was vespers, and 'twas midnight here.
- 7 The rays were striking full our face upon,  
for so we circling round the mountain went  
that we were going toward the setting sun;
- 10 When yet far more I felt my forehead bent  
beneath the splendour that did on it smite,  
and the strange matters were my wonderment:
- 13 Wherefore I made a visor to my sight,  
lifting my hands above these brows of mine  
so as to temper the excess of light.
- 16 As when on glass or water sunbeams shine,  
then in the opposite direction dart,  
ascending in a corresponding line
- 19 To that of their descent, and so depart  
equally from the falling of the stone,  
as demonstrate experiment and art;
- 22 So I felt struck by light reflected, thrown  
from straight before, whence from the vivid gleam  
quick fled my sight. 'What is that, O mine own
- 25 Father,' said I, 'intolerably beaming  
so that I find no shelter for mine eyes?  
and coming on to usward, or so seeming.'
- 28 'If dazzle thee the household of the skies  
as yet, be it no wonder,' came reply;  
'that is a Messenger to bid man rise.'
- 31 Soon will it not be grievous to thine eye  
to look on these things, but complete delight  
up to the top of thy capacity.'
- 34 When we had reached the Angel benedight,  
his glad voice said: 'From here thou enterest  
a stair than others far less steep of flight.'

- 37 Departing thence, we mounted now, and *Blest  
are the compassionate*, did it intone  
behind us, and *Rejoice, thou conquerest!*
- 40 My Master and myself, we two alone,  
were going up, and going, I took thought  
how from his words to gain some benison;
- 43 And turned me to him, thus inquiring: 'What  
could he have meant, the spirit Romagnole,  
speaking of sharing as permitted not?'
- 46 Then he: 'Of his own greatest sin, that soul  
conceives the harm; whence let it not surprise  
if he rebuke it, that there be less dole.'
- 49 For inasmuch as your heart's treasure lies  
where through companionship ye lose a share,  
doth Envy work the bellows for your sighs.
- 52 But if love for the most exalted sphere  
should make your aspiration upward turn,  
ye would not harbour in your breast that fear;
- 55 Because the more there yonder be who yearn  
to murmur 'Ours', the more has each, and more  
of charity doth in that cloister burn.'
- 58 'I am further from contentment than before  
I ceased from being silent,' then I said,  
'and more of doubt within my mind I store.'
- 61 How can a single boon, distributed,  
give many holders wealth more unconfined,  
than if it be by few inherited?
- 64 And he: 'Because thou centrest thy mind  
only on earthly things, thy inward sight  
is, in the plenitude of brightness, blind.'
- 67 That inexpressible and infinite  
boon up above there, so to love outflows,  
as to a lucid body runs the light.
- 70 Much as it finds of ardour, it bestows;  
so that, however spread the flame of love,  
above it the Eternal Bounty grows.
- 73 And the more people set their hearts above,  
the more love well there, and more love is wrought,  
and mirrors each to each the bliss thereof.

- 76 And if my reasoning appease thee not,  
     thou shalt see Beatrice, by her disfreighted  
     of this and every other craving thought.
- 79 Two of thy wounds are now obliterated:  
     but strive that speedily, the same as these,  
     the five may close, by sorrow expiated.'
- 82 As I was fain to say, 'Thou dost appease,'  
     behold! another Circle did I gain,  
     and eager eyes compelled me hold my peace.
- 85 There suddenly I felt me overta'en  
     by an ecstatic vision, whence beguiled,  
     I saw a crowd of people in a fane;
- 88 And at the door a Lady, with the mild  
     mien of a mother, seemed to say this thing:  
     'Ah, why hast thou so dealt with us, my child?
- 91 Thy father and myself, lo! sorrowing  
     were seeking thee.' As here she ceased to speak,  
     that which had first appeared was vanishing.
- 94 Another then appeared, adown whose cheek  
     those waters coursed that grief distils, when great  
     resentment upon others it would wreak:
- 97 'If Master of the town that such debate  
     caused to the gods about its name,' said she,  
     'and whence doth every science scintillate,
- 100 Upon that bold embrace avenge thou thee,  
     that clasped our daughter, O Pisistratus!'  
     Her lord benign and gentle seemed to me
- 103 To answer her with temperate manner thus:  
     'What shall we do to them who wish us ill,  
     if they who love us are condemned by us?'
- 106 Then I saw angry folk afame with will  
     to slay a youth by stoning, raising cries  
     hoarsely to one another: 'Kill him, kill!'
- 109 And saw him bowed to earth, and now he lies  
     under the weight of Death, yet, thus undone,  
     still making gates to Heaven with his eyes;
- 112 Lifting to the High Lord his orison,  
     with look such as unlocks our sympathy,  
     for pardon to his slayers every one.

- Soon as returned my spirit outwardly  
to things external to it, which are true,  
did I my not erroneous errors see.
- Thereon my Leader, who could see me do  
like one disputing slumber's masterdom,  
exclaimed: 'What ails thee? canst not stand? go to!  
For half a league and farther art thou come  
with eyes veiled over, and with legs that sway,  
like one with wine or slumber overcome.'
- Then said I: 'O my gentle Father, pray  
listen to me, and I will tell thee what  
I saw, when thus my legs were ta'en away!'  
'A hundred masks upon thy face would not  
avail to shut thy mind from me,' he said,  
'however trivial might be thy thought.  
What thou hast seen was that thou mayst be led  
to ope thy heart to waters of repose  
that pour from the eternal fountainhead.  
I did not ask "What ails thee?" as do those  
who only look with inattentive glance  
when rest of consciousness the body shows,  
But asked that vigorous thy foot advance:  
thus it behoves to spur the laggard, slow  
to put to proof returning vigilance.  
Still forward through the vesper did we go,  
straining as far as possible the eye  
against the late and shining rays; and lo!  
By slow degrees toward us coming nigh  
a cloud of smoke, as gloomy as the night,  
nor was there any place of shelter by:  
This of pure air bereft us and of sight.

## NOTES

*Late afternoon of second day. Encounter of the Angel and professed discourse on the ascent by the Pass of Pardon to the next Cornice.*

ll. 1-6. The sphere is surely not the Ecliptic but the visible heavens, our sky, conceived as always in happy, innocent activity. Vespers is the time from 3 to 6 p.m. At 3 in Purgatory it would be midnight in Italy.

ll. 7-24. Although the light of the setting sun shines full in his eyes, an incomparably greater light strikes them at the same instant. In describing it he refers to the physical law, then less familiar than now, that the angle of reflection of a ray is equal to the angle of incidence, so that the departure of each from the perpendicular is the same. To this day one may see in Italy a stone used as a plummet.

ll. 37 ff. Ascent to the Terrace of the Wrathful through the Pass of Pardon of xiii. 42.

l. 44. Guido del Duca: lines 86-7 of Canto xiv.

ll. 46-75. This seems to me one of the most sweetly consoling passages in the Poem, foretelling a region where the earthly pilgrim may find wealth of a nature to be increased, rather than diminished, by sharing. In Dante's time the chief end of man appeared to be to prepare to emigrate from this world where we are slaves of Avarice and where Envy works the bellows for our sighs. But as the Heavens, which then seemed so near, recede before our advance like the desert mirage, we begin to feel the need of realizing on this side of the dark waters values incommensurable, subject to no shrinkage like our *peau de chagrin*, and capable of being bequeathed to coming generations exempt from any devastating inheritance-tax.

l. 83. The Cornice where the sins are purged that have their root in Wrath.

ll. 85-114. Three visions of Forbearance: lessons to the Wrathful.

l. 88. The Virgin Mother.

ll. 101-5. Pisistratus, lord of Athens, whose daughter was publicly kissed by her lover to the great indignation of the mother. But Pisistratus gave a gentle answer and gained a son-in-law, presumably desirable, thus giving a lesson to over-anxious elders, prone to think ill of the rising generation.

ll. 106 ff. The stoning of Saint Stephen.

. 117. *Non falsi errori*: false only as matters of fact; true as poetry and parable are true.

ll. 118-32. It is peculiarly appropriate that just here the Poet should be rapt and drunken with these noble visions in an ecstasy as intense as that whereby the soul is swept away in the storm of ignoble wrath. If himself somewhat quick to anger, he seems to hear his Master admonish:

‘O gentle son  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience.’

l. 143. The symbolic smoke of wrath.

## CANTO XVI

*Laulessness of the Temporal Power of the Clergy*

- 1 The gloom of Hades and of shades that shroud  
     every star beneath a barren sky,  
     darkened as much as possible with cloud,
- 4 Made never veil so thick unto mine eyc  
     nor of so rough a tissue to the feeling,  
     as did that smoke we there were covered by,
- 7 From the closed eye all vision quite concealing;  
     whereat mine Escort sapient and tried  
     offered me help, his shoulder tow'rd me wheeling.
- 10 Even as a blind man goes behind his guide,  
     and lest he haply stumble against aught  
     might hurt or kill him, does not go aside,
- 13 So faring through that bitter fume, I caught  
     the accents of my Guide, who did but say:  
     'Take care that we be separated not!'
- 16 Voices I heard, and each appeared to pray  
     that might in peace and in compassion come  
     the Lamb of God who takes our sins away.
- 19 Just *Agnus Dei* was their exordium,  
     one measure was for all, and one desire,  
     so that in harmony seemed all and some.
- 22 'Master, can what I hear,' did I inquire,  
     'be spirits?' 'Thou hast said it,' he replied,  
     'and they go loosening the knot of ire.'
- 25 'Now who art thou cleaving our smoke aside,  
     who art discoursing of us even as though  
     thou didst by calends still the time divide?
- 28 Speech by a single voice was uttered so:  
     whereat the Master said: 'Thy answer be  
     to ask if here the pathway upward go.'
- 31 And I: 'O creature that art cleansing thee,  
     to return beautiful to Him who made,  
     shalt hear a wonder if thou follow me.'
- 34 'I'll follow thee far as I may,' it said,  
     'and if the smoke still make our seeing vain,  
     to keep us joined shall hearing serve instead.'

- 37 'Swathed in the bands that Death unbinds again,'  
began I, 'do I go the upward road,  
and hither came I through the eternal pain;
- 40 And since enfolds me so the grace of God,  
showing His will that I behold His court  
by way quite other than our modern mode,
- 43 What man thou wast ere death do thou report,  
concealing naught, and tell me if I go  
right for the pass; and let thy words escort.'
- 46 'Lombard was I, called Marco; and did know  
the world's concerning, and that virtue love  
whereat each one has now unbent the bow:
- 49 For mounting up do thou straight forward move.'  
Thus answering, 'I pray thee,' added he,  
'to pray for me when thou shalt be above.'
- 52 And I to him: 'I pledge my faith to thee  
to do that which thou cravest; but I burst  
with inward doubt till from it I am free.
- 55 Elsewhere suggested, it was simple first,  
but now confirmed by words which thou hast said,  
redoubled, and to know the cause I thirst.
- 58 The world in very deed is forfeited  
to vice by virtue all, as thou dost say,  
and is with evil big and overspread:
- 61 But put thy finger on the cause, I pray,  
that I, discerning it, let others know  
whether the blame to heaven or earth to lay.'
- 64 Voicing his deep sighs in a cry by woe  
wrung from him, he began: 'The world is blind,  
brother, and sooth thou comst from there below.
- 67 All causes are by you who live assigned  
to heavens above, as if their motion still  
did of necessity all natures bind.
- 70 If this were true, your freedom of the will  
would be destroyed, and it would not be right  
to have or joy for good, or grief for ill.
- 73 The heavens do your first impulses excite,—  
I say not all; but grant that this I said,  
for good or evil there is given you light

- 76 And free volition; which to battle led  
     against the stars, though weary it commence,  
     finally conquers all, if rightly fed.
- 79 Though free, ye are subject to omnipotence  
     and better nature, which doth in you mould  
     the mind, exempt from starry influence.
- 82 Hence if the present world go uncontrolled,  
     in you the cause, let it be sought in you:  
     and true intelligence I now unfold.
- 85 Forth from the hand of her Creator, who  
     loves her before she be, in maiden guise,  
     with gleeful laughter and with tears of rue,
- 88 Issues the innocent soul, in nothing wise  
     save that, from blithesome Maker, turns she fain  
     to things wherein some specious pleasure lies.
- 91 Cheated at first, she tastes the savour vain  
     of trivial good, and runs to that desire,  
     with appetite unswayed by guide or rein.
- 94 Hence law by way of bridle we require;  
     require a king discerning from aloof  
     of the true City of God at least the spire.
- 97 Laws are,—but who to put them to the proof?  
     None: since the shepherd, he who goes before,  
     can chew the cud but cleaveth not the hoof.
- 100 Whence folk who see their leader striking for  
     that having which they greedily pursue,  
     being fed with that, hunger for nothing more.
- 103 Well canst thou see that governance untrue  
     the cause is that hath made the world malign,  
     and not that nature is corrupt in you.
- 106 Rome, that redeemed the world, once gave to shine  
     two suns, which both the one and the other course  
     made manifest,—the worldly, the divine.
- 109 The one hath quenched the other; and perforce,  
     the sword together with the crozier wed,  
     ill can but come of it till they divorce,
- 112 Since, joined, the one doth not the other dread.  
     Consider well, if thou believe not so,  
     the fruit, for every plant is known by seed.

- 115 In the land laved by Adige and Po,  
    valour was once in vogue, and courtesy,  
    ere Frederick had quarrelled with his soc;
- 118 Now can fare through it with security  
    any whom sense of shame may set at strife  
    from speaking with the good or drawing nigh.
- 121 Survive still, to rebuke the manners rise,  
    three veterans, and long appears the road  
    to them, till God conduct to better life:
- 124 Conrad, named of Palazzo, Gerard good,  
    and Guido of Castello,—better say  
    the loyal Lombard, after the French mode.
- 127 The Church of Rome, declare thou from this day  
    that would in double government engage,  
    falls with its burden in the miry way.'
- 130 'O Marco mine,' said I, 'thy words are sage;  
    and now I see why Levi's children should  
    have been excluded from the heritage.
- 133 But who is Gerard, that example good,  
    thou sayest, of a generation spent,  
    who lives to upbraid our barbarous period?'
- 136 'Cheat me thy words, or make experiment,  
    in that thou, speaking Tuscan,' he replied,  
    'seemst of good Gerard unintelligent.
- 139 I know him not by any name beside,  
    unless 'twere from his daughter Gaia drawn.  
    I come no farther; so be God your guide.
- 142 Already through the smoke the splendour yon  
    is whitening,—the Angel is there,—before  
    he has perceived me, I must needs be gone.'
- 145 So he turned back, and would not hear me more.

## NOTES

*Terrace of the Wrathful: late afternoon of the second day.*

*l. 19.* The *Agnus Dei*, with its petition for compassion and peace, is of all offices perhaps best suited to allay the brief madness of anger.

*l. 27.* 'In Dante's time the ancient usage still existed of terming the first day of the month calends' (Torraca). The speaker infers from Dante's inquiry that he has not yet passed over into eternal conditions, where time is no longer artificially divided as among the living on earth.

*l. 42.* Modern, i.e., since the time of Saint Paul. Cf. beginning of *Inferno* ii.

*l. 46.* Marco Lombardo: a great figure in his day, who left a reputation for sagacity, wit, brusque candour, liberality, honour. If he was prone to ire, he probably had good reason. Villani relates that Count Ugolino, having arranged a splendid festival, made a great display of his pomp and power to Marco, who held his tongue until Ugolino inquired: 'Marco, what say you to it?' Whereupon the sage quickly replied: 'You are in a fairer way to be subject to mischance than any baron of Italy.' 'Why?' faltered the Count. 'Because,' retorted Marco, 'because all you lack is the wrath of God!' And surely, subjoins Villani, the wrath of God soon enough came upon him!

*ll. 65 ff.* Dante proceeds, in accordance with the psychology of the age as expounded by Saint Thomas Aquinas, as well as by earlier sages like Boethius and Saint Augustine, to point out that the influence of the stars upon human fate has certain limits, and that the Will can make head against that influence. The opening lines recall the words put by Homer into the mouth of Jove:

'O how falsely men  
Accuse us Gods as authors of their ill!  
When, by the bane their own bad lives instill,  
They suffer all the miseries of their states,  
Past our inflictions, and beyond their fates.'

(*Odyssey*, Book i, Chapman's translation.)

The best illustration of the main drift of the exposition is found in the words of Saint Augustine: 'The human mind that is not over-ruled by the Heavens is the soul in so far as it is free and rational, in which aspect it is superior to all material nature.' (*The City of God*, v. i.)

ll. 94-7. Where, if the pastor (or shepherd) lead the flock astray, is the mere layman, even if he be a magistrate, to look for the tower of the true City of God? Where but in that Rome of which Christ is a Roman (*Purgatorio* xxxii. 102)? On what map is shown that metropolis and see? Did He not say: 'The kingdom of God is within you'?

ll. 98 ff. Chewing the cud (ruminating) is the business of the Pastor. The cleft hoof, which does not easily slip, symbolizes the practical wisdom of the magistrate. But the Pastor has usurped the functions of the Magistrate. Dante's political theory of the proper division of the functions of Church and State, of Pope and Emperor, is developed in his *De Monarchia*. To what he regarded as the usurpation on the part of the Ecclesiastic Power of the functions of the Secular Power Dante is everywhere consistently hostile, tracing to the temporal power of the Papacy most of the moral and political corruption of the age.

ll. 106-8. The clergy had long and strenuously taught that the spiritual rule was the Sun and the temporal rule only the Moon, shining by light reflected from the greater luminary. And so great was the force of such metaphors upon the mind of man at that time, that Dante in the *De Monarchia*, before proceeding to his constructive argument, was obliged to enter upon an elaborate discussion in order to dissipate the influence of the specious analogy.

ll. 115-26. Before the long struggle waged by Emperor Frederick II against a succession of popes, the people of Lombardy and Venice were noted for courtesy and valour. Now, on the other hand, one who for reasons of his own desires to avoid the searching glances of good men, may go his ways in security. The little that is known of the three good men so briefly mentioned is to be found in Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary*.

l. 140. This somewhat indefinite allusion doubtless involves a compliment to a great lady who inherited and increased the honour of a stainless name. Any other interpretation is both baseless and graceless. It has been suggested that her name Gaia, as connotive of good breeding and courtesy, may be applied descriptively to her father, who would thus go by the double designation of the good and courteous Gerard (Gherardo).

ll. 142-4. The white radiance of the Angel who guards the foot of the next following 'Pass of Pardon', or ascent to the Terrace of *Acedia*.

## CANTO XVII

*Profitable Discourse during the Second Night*

- 1 Recall to mind if ever shut thee in,  
     Reader, a cloud upon the Apennine,  
     wherethrough thou sawest but as mole through skin;
- 4 How, when the dank, dense vapours discombine,  
     and slowly fall away, the solar sphere  
     comes struggling in again with feeble shine;
- 7 And to thy fantasy it will be clear  
     immediately, how I saw once more  
     the sun, that was already setting here.
- 10 To the sure footsteps of my Counsellor  
     matching my own, from such a cloud I thus  
     emerged to rays now dead on the low shore.
- 13 O power of fancy, oft withdrawing us  
     so from without, we show indifference  
     though a thousand trumpets round are clamorous;
- 16 Who moves thee if impel thee not the sense?  
     Moves thee a heaven-informed illumining,  
     led down by will or starry influence.
- 19 Appeared the trace in my imagining  
     of her, the pitiless, who changed, some say,  
     into the bird that most delights to sing;
- 22 And here my intellect in such a way  
     was locked within, that nothing was descried  
     of any object that outside it lay.
- 25 In my raised fantasy, one crucified  
     rained down thereafterward, of scornful mood  
     and rancorous in mien, and so he died.
- 28 Around him great Ahasuerus stood,  
     Esther his wife, just Mordecai, he who  
     in word and deed was of such rectitude.
- 31 And as this image of itself withdrew,  
     collapsing like a bubble when it wants  
     the film of water it was fashioned through,
- 34 Uprose a youthful maiden in my trance,  
     bitterly weeping, and she cried: 'O Queen,  
     why wouldest thou be naught in petulance?'

- 7 To lose Lavinia not, thyself hast slain:  
now thou hast lost me; she who mourns am I,  
mother, for thee, ere for another's teen.'
- 8 And even as slumber breaks, when suddenly  
upon closed eyelids strikes the morning light,  
and, broken, wavers ere it wholly die,
- 3 So fell away from me this fancied sight,  
soon as there struck upon my face a glare  
that, matched with what we know, seemed infinite.
- 6 When I had turned to see the way to fare,  
I heard: 'Here go ye up!' in accents blest  
withdrawing me from every other care,
- 9 Making my will so eager in request  
to know the speaker, and to look and see,  
that, until face to face, it cannot rest.
- 2 But as before the sun, excessively  
resplendent, veiling so its form from sight,  
thus was the power deficient here in me.
- 5 'This is a spirit divine, who tow'rd the height,  
without our prayer, points where we should be hieing,  
and wraps himself about with his own light.
- 8 He deals with us as self to self replying;  
for who waits prayer, while to the need alive,  
malignly leans already to denying.
- 1 To such inviting let the foot now strive:  
upward endeavour we ere day be dim,  
else could we not until new day arrive.'
- 4 So having said, my Guide, and I with him,  
together tow'rd a stairway turned our feet;  
and soon as I set foot on the first rim,
- 7 I felt a fanning on my face like beat  
of wings, and heard: 'Blest the Peacemakers are,  
for wrath unrighteous hath in them no seat!'
- 9 Now were uplifted over us so far  
the parting beams whereon the night pursues,  
that upon every side shone forth a star.
- 3 'Alas, why are my sinews grown so loose?'  
within me I began to murmur, for  
I felt my power of limb was put in truce.

- 76 Come were we where ascended now no more  
     the stairway up, and there we fast were stayed,  
     even as a vessel moored upon the shore;
- 79 And for a little while I gave full heed  
     if aught were heard within the circle new;  
     then to my Master turned about, and said:
- 82 'Inform me here, beloved Father true,  
     what fault is in this circle purified?  
     though pause the feet, let not thy word so do.'
- 85 And he to me: 'The love of good, denied  
     its due activity, is here restored;  
     here the ill-slackened oar again is plied.
- 88 Wouldst thou more clearly comprehend my word  
     be but attentive and, although we wait,  
     thou shalt derive some profit and reward.
- 91 Neither Creator, no, nor thing create,  
     son,' he began, 'was ever void of love,—  
     thou knowest it,—or of spirit, or innate.
- 94 Innate love doth ever faultless prove;  
     but the other, by ill aim, or little might,  
     or by excessive might, is prone to rove.
- 97 While tends to primal goods the appetite,  
     in secondary things self-moderator,  
     it cannot be the cause of ill delight;
- 100 But when it turns to evil, or with greater  
     or less than proper zeal, on good is bent,  
     the creature works against its own Creator.
- 103 As seed in you of all that's excellent,  
     thou mayest infer that Love must needs have served  
     and of each act that merits punishment.
- 106 Since never can the eye of love have swerved  
     from its own person, it must be concluded  
     that from self-hatred all things are preserved;
- 109 And since no being can be thought secluded,  
     standing alone, cut from First Cause away,  
     from hate of Him is every heart precluded.
- 112 Hence if, distinguishing, I rightly say  
     it is your neighbour's harin you love, takes root  
     this love in triple fashion in your clay.

- 15 There are who, seeing their neighbour underfoot,  
    hope to excel, and for this reason, down  
        from his high pinnacle would have him put.
- 18 There are who power, grace, honour, or renown  
    fearing to forfeit, if another rise,  
        crave the reverse, and on his fortune frown;
- 21 Then those who seem to chase at injuries,  
    greedy for vengeance, so that it behoves  
        them evil to another to devise.
- 24 Yonder below are wept these threefold loves:  
    now of the other do I thee to wit,  
        that to the good in faulty measure moves.
- 27 Vaguely each one conceives a benefit  
    wherin the mind may rest, and yearns thereto;  
        whence each endeavours to attain to it.
- 30 If languid be the love inciting you  
    to look upon it, or to make pursuit,  
        this Cornice pains you on repentance due.
- 33 There's other good wherein there is no boot:  
    it is not happiness, is not the good  
        essence, of every good the fruit and root.
- 36 The love that yields unduly to such mood  
    is up above bewept in circles three;  
        but how it were tripartite understood,
- 39 I leave unspoken, to be sought by thee.'

## NOTES

*Sunset of second day: Terrace of the Wrathful.*

ll. 13-18. To this question the psychology of that <sup>in</sup> afforded the answer here succinctly given: the receptive <sup>in</sup> is stirred by immediate stellar influence, or by the direct <sup>in</sup> Divine Will. 'In the imagination of man by Divine <sup>in</sup> are sometimes formed phantasms, which express divine <sup>in</sup> more perfectly than those impressions which we receive naturally from sensible objects, as appears in prophetic <sup>in</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, from which <sup>in</sup> other passages are cited by commentators. Boccaccio <sup>in</sup> a striking example of Dante's abstraction over a book at *Vita di Dante*, § 8.

l. 20. Procne (or Progne), see Canto ix, l. 14. Dante follows Ovid. There is a more common version of the myth that Procne Philomela the nightingale.

ll. 20-39. These three examples of the devastating effects of Wrath are parallel to the three contrasting examples of gentleness cited in Canto xv. It is significant that of the six four are of women. As this is unusual we must look for reason, which is perhaps the following: Just as gentleness is more characteristic of woman, so wrath is in her uglier more deforming.

l. 25. Haman (Book of Esther). The *Vulgate* in one <sup>in</sup> (v. 14) terms the scaffold a 'cross'.

l. 34. Lavinia, whose mother had killed herself at a false report of the death of Turnus, *Aeneid* xii, 595-603.

ll. 52-7. These effects of light, from the appearance of the Sun in Canto i, and the coming of the Angel Pilot in Canto ii, notable as they are, will be used with ever greater frequency, and with a variety that appears superhuman throughout the Poem, especially in the *Paradiso*. The passage before us probably stimulated Milton's sensitive (if imitative) imagination in such passages as that in *Paradise Lost*, iii. 375-82, and 598-9. Cf.

'Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear;  
and,

'... whose top  
Brightness had made invisible'.

ll. 70-2. Second nightfall.

l. 85 to end. The discourses of Love and Free Will.

the radical difference between the classification of sins in Hell and that which is set forth here (cf. *Inferno xi*). In Hell specific sinful deeds are punished; here the Will is purified. Thus the generic vice which Dante calls Avarice may be the occasion of a great variety of specific sins. To repent of a given sin is one thing; to have the crooked Will so straightened that Love is awakened for the corresponding virtue, is quite another. The Avaricious, for example, desires to continue his cleansing and straightening process until unselfish generosity becomes a passion in him.

ll. 85-7. Inactive or 'empty' (*scemo*) love of the good is purged on this shelf of the Mountain by severe athletic discipline. Here the exercise suggested is that of rowing; later, for obvious reasons, running is preferred. Whatever it is let it be strenuous! Dante uses the theological term *Accidia* only once (*Canto xviii*, l. 132). That he calls those gurgling ones of *Inferno vii*. 118 ff. 'accidiose' is significant: a warning of the sunken state to which 'empty' virtue may fall. These terms are dropped in this translation.

ll. 94 ff. Two kinds of love: innate and self-directed.

ll. 100 ff. When love of worldly goods is not moderated, or when love of spiritual good is torpid.

ll. 103-11. Even if we harm ourselves, we do so actuated by mistaken desire for our own good. And since we are effects of the First Cause, 'in whom we live and move and have our being', and apart from whom we cannot be conceived as existing, to hate Him would be equivalent to hating ourselves. The pregnant comment upon this passage is the following by George Santayana: 'The good—this was the fundamental thought of Aristotle and of all Greek ethics—the good is the end at which all nature aims. The demands of life cannot be radically perverse, since they are the judges of every excellence. No man, as Dante says, could hate his own soul; he could not at once be, and contradict, the voice of his instincts and emotions. Nor could a man hate God; for if that man knew himself, he would see that God was, by definition, his natural good, the ultimate goal of his actual aspirations.'

ll. 115 ff. Pride.

ll. 118 ff. Envy.

ll. 121 ff. Wrath.

l. 124. These three affections purged in the lower terraces.

ll. 130 ff. Sloth.

ll. 136 ff. Perverted love takes three forms, as will be seen later.

## CANTO XVIII

*Discoursing on the Nature of Love and Free Will*

- 1 The lofty Teacher, ending argument,  
gave me a searching look, as for inferring  
from play of feature if I seemed content.
- 4 And I, whom new thirst was already spurring,  
was mute without, but said within: 'Perchance  
I burden him, too many a question stirring.'
- 7 But that true Father, who took cognizance  
of the shy wish that was concealed from view,  
speaking, put heart in me for utterance.
- 10 'Master,' said I, 'my sight so lives anew  
within thy light that I discern by it  
all that thy words enunciate as true.'
- 13 Define, however, if that prayer be fit,  
the love whereto thou tracest, Father kind,  
every good action and its opposite.'
- 16 'Direct to me the keen eyes of the mind,'  
said he, 'and see the error demonstrated  
of those who would be leaders, being blind.'
- 19 The soul, susceptible to love created,  
responds to all things pleasing in its view,  
when once to act by pleasure stimulated.
- 22 Now your perception doth from something true  
derive an image and within you unfold  
so as to cause the soul to turn thereto;
- 25 And if, when turned, she tends there uncontrolled,  
that tendency is love, 'tis Nature's bent  
through pleasure getting in you a fresh hold.
- 28 Then, even as fire has motion of ascent,  
by virtue of its form which makes it wing  
to where it dwells more in its element:
- 31 So the rapt soul doth into longing spring,  
a spiritual motion, never still  
till she rejoice in the beloved thing.
- 34 Now may be evident how very ill  
they view the truth, who would aver to thee  
that all love in itself is laudable,

37 Because its matter may ideally

appear good always: but not every seal  
is good, however good the wax may be.'

o 'Thy words, and my wit following, reveal  
Love and its nature to me,' answered I,  
'but therefore all the greater doubt I feel;

3 For if Love offer from without, and by  
another foot the spirit travel not,  
she has no merit, go she straight or wry.'

6 And he to me: 'As far as pierces thought,  
myself can tell: beyond that fix thy mind  
on Beatrice, that faith in thee be wrought.

9 Every substantial form that is conjoined  
with matter, and yet from it cut away,  
holds inward virtue of specific kind,

2 Which, save in act, is not brought into play,  
' by its effect alone in evidence,  
like life in plant evinced by the green spray.

5 Thus, whence originates intelligence  
of first ideas, is unknown to thee,  
and bent of the primordial appetite,

8 Which are in you as study in the bee  
to make its honey; and such primal bent  
of neither praise nor blame receives the fee.

1 Now, that with this may all desires consent,  
the power that counsels is innate in you,  
and ought to hold the threshold of assent.

4 This is the principle wherefrom accrue  
the grounds of your desert, as gathering  
and winnowing the false loves from the true.

7 Who to the bottom went in reasoning,  
took notice of this inborn liberty,  
thus morals to the world delivering.

o Assuming, then, that from necessity  
all love is kindled rightly or amiss,  
to hinder it ye have ability.

3 This noble virtue is called by Beatrice  
the Freedom of the Will; take heed aright  
if she begin to speak to thee of this.'

- 76 The slow moon tow'rd the middle of the night,  
     shaped like a bucket all ablaze, more wan  
     now made the constellations to our sight,
- 79 And counter to the heavens that pathway ran  
     fired by the setting sun, which he of Rome  
     sees 'twixt Sardinian and Corsican;
- 82 When he, that noble shade by fame of whom  
     Pietola every Mantuan town outwent,  
     had put aside my fardel burdensome:
- 85 So that I, who explicit argument  
     and lucid to my questioning had found,  
     remained like one who rambles somnolent.
- 88 But from this somnolence I was unbound  
     all of a sudden by a multitude  
     toward us from behind now coming round.
- 91 Of old Ismenus and Asopus viewed  
     such hurrying throng at night their banks beside,  
     if Thebans but in need of Bacchus stood,
- 94 As these who round that Cornice curve their stride,  
     from what I saw of those approaching me,  
     on whom goodwill and right affection ride.
- 97 They were soon upon us, for that great company  
     was coming at a run; and with lament  
     two in advance cried out alternately:
- 100 'Mary in haste to the hill country went,'  
     and, 'Cesar, to conquer Lerida, in haste  
     struck at Marseilles, and then swept Spainward bent.'
- 103 'Quick, quickly, lest the moment go to waste  
     through little love!' did the others then intone,  
     'that zeal for doing good be freshly graced.'
- 106 'O people, in whom keen fervour doth atone  
     perchance, delay and negligence which you  
     by lukewarmness in doing good have shown,
- 109 This man who lives (I surely tell you true!)  
     would fain go up, if shine again the sun;  
     so tell us where is nearest passage through.'
- 112 These words were spoken by my Guide; and one  
     among those spirits answered: 'Follow us,  
     and thou shalt find the opening anon.'

- 15 We are so full of zeal for running thus,  
we cannot stay; pardon, we therefore cry,  
if this our duty seems discourteous.
- 18 San Zeno's abbot at Verona I,  
beneath good Barbarossa's empire, whom  
yet Milan cannot name without a sigh.
- 21 And one has foot already in the tomb  
who shall ere long that monastery rue,  
and rue the having had there masterdom,
- 24 Because his son, in body lame, thereto  
mind lamer still, and who was born amiss,  
he put in office of its pastor true.'
- 27 I know not whether yet he held his peace,  
so far beyond us he was hurrying,  
but gladly I remember hearing this.
- 30 And he who was my help in everything  
now said: 'Turn hitherward and look,—two more  
are coming onward, giving sloth a sting.'
- 33 'Dead were the folk whom ocean opened for,'  
they, bringing up the rear, were crying thus,  
'ere Jordan looked on its inheritor,'—
- 36 And,—'Those who found it too laborious  
to bide the issue with Anchises' son,  
gave themselves up to life inglorious.'
- 39 Then, when so distant were those shades that none  
could more be seen of all that multitude,  
my mind began upon new thoughts to run,
- 42 Whence many more were born, a motley brood;  
and so did one upon another teem,  
I lapsed with closed eyes into drowsihood,
- 45 Transmuting meditation into dream.

## NOTES

*Second night: Terrace of the Slothful. Philosophical discourse continued.*

ll. 13 ff. Dante himself, in the *Convivio*, iii. 2, gives<sup>25</sup> interesting parallel treatment of this theory that all human actions are prompted by love well directed or misdirected. A sentence or two may be acceptable to the reader: 'Love, truly considered and subtly analysed, is nothing but spiritual union between the soul and the beloved object; into which union of its own nature the soul runs swiftly or slowly accordingly as it is free or hampered.' 'And since it is most natural to wish to be in God . . . and since its being depends on God and is conserved by Him, it naturally desires and wills to be united with God for its own strengthening. And since in the excellencies of Nature and Reason the Divine is manifested, it follows that the human soul unites naturally with those excellencies in a spiritual way, and that the sooner and more firmly the more perfectly they appear. . . . This union is what we term Love, and its quality within the soul can be discerned by looking at those things outside that are beloved.'

l. 29. 'Form' means essential nature: thus the form of fire is its entity by virtue of which it is fire and not something else. It is the form of fire to rise into the sphere of fire (cf. close of *Paradiso* i).

l. 35. The Epicureans.

l. 44. 'Foot,'—i.e., motive.

l. 46. Virgil stands merely for human reason.

l. 49. Scholastic phrasing: soul, although joined with matter, is yet distinct from it.

l. 62. Reason watches at the threshold between this instinct and free desires.

l. 67. Aristotle and Plato recognized free will as the cornerstone of Ethics.

ll. 76–81. Briefly, the moon, which was full at the beginning of the journey (*Inferno* xx. 127) is now gibbous in its third quarter, and has backed so far against the course of the heavens that it appears, on rising, in that constellation in which the sun appears when the Roman sees it setting a little south of west—over the strait between Sardinia and Corsica. For a full explanation of this complicated series of allusions I must refer the curious reader to Moore's *Studies in Dante*, iii. 71–3.

- I. 83. The modern name of Virgil's birthplace.  
II. 89 ff. The purgation of the slothful in spirit.  
I. 93. Their patron god.  
II. 99 ff. The voices in the air that 'scourge' the indifferent.  
II. 121 ff. Albert, lord of Verona, had made the priorate a berth for his lame natural son. In Leviticus xxi are enumerated the blemishes excluding men from the priesthood. The rule of the Church there stated is flagrantly violated by this arrogant lord.  
II. 133-8. Those lukewarm Children of Israel who were left in the wilderness, and those followers of Aeneas who chose to stay in Sicily.  
II. 142 ff. The medley of thoughts that lapse into dream.

## CANTO XIX

*A Repentant Pope (Adrian V)*

- 1 It was the hour wherein the heat of noon,  
by Saturn haply, or by earth undone,  
can warm no more the coldness of the moon;
- 4 When geomancers see before the dawn  
their Greater Fortune rising eastward through  
a course she will not long go darkling on;
- 7 I saw in dream a stammering woman, who  
was squint of eye, and of distorted feet,  
bereft of hands, and sallow in her hue.
- 10 I gazed at her: as from the sun streams heat  
into the limbs made chilly by the night,  
even so my gazing served to liberate
- 13 Her tongue, and erelong wholly set her right,  
and with the pallor of her features blent  
the flushes that to love are requisite.
- 16 Thereon her speech became so eloquent,  
and so her song began to charm mine ear,  
that scarce could I away from her have bent:
- 19 'Sweet Siren I, who witch the mariner  
amid the billows,' she began to sing,  
'so full of pleasantness am I to hear;
- 22 I turned Ulysses from his wandering  
by power of song; who listen to my strain  
seldom depart from me, all-solacing.'
- 25 Her parted lips had not yet closed again,  
ere for her quick confusion, at my side,  
a Lady holy and alert was seen.
- 28 'O Virgil, Virgil, who is this!'—she cried  
indignantly; and he was drawing near  
with looks but to that modest Virtue tied.
- 31 He seized the other one and laid her bare,  
rending her garb, the belly to display;  
this waked me with the stench arising there.
- 34 Eying the Master good, I heard him say:  
'Thrice have I called thee; rise and come, to find  
the opening where goes thy passageway.'

- 37 I rise: lo! round the sacred Mountain wind  
the Cornices in open day; and now  
we go our way with the new sun behind.
- 40 Following after him, I bore my brow  
like one who makes himself, o'erborne with thought,  
into the half-arch of a bridge to bow;
- 43 When 'Come, here is the passage!'—this I caught  
in accents mild, of such benignity  
as in this mortal region hear we not.
- 46 With swan-like pinions widely open, he  
upward directed us, so having said,  
between two walls of solid masonry.
- 49 With moving wings, he wastre on us shed,  
affirming that the mourners shall be blest,  
for they shall have their spirits comforted.
- 52 'What ails thee that thou earthward rivetest  
thy glance?'—began to say to me my Guide,  
when somewhat past the Angel we had pressed.
- 55 And I: 'With such misgiving am I plied  
by novel vision of compulsive stress,  
so that my thoughts as by a spell are tied.'
- 58 'Hast seen,' said he, 'that ancient sorceress?  
she who alone is now bewept up yond,  
and seen how man is loosed from her duress?
- 61 Be it enough,—beat heels upon the ground,—  
lift eyes toward the lorc up, that with vast  
circles, the Eternal King is whirling round.
- 64 Like hawk that, eyeing first her feet, at last  
turns to the call and spreads her pinions out,  
by longing yonder drawn to break her fast;
- 67 Such I, and such, far as affords a route  
the cloven rock to them who upward go,  
I went where starts the circling round about.
- 70 When opened to me the Fifth Cornice, lo!  
people who wept upon it there, nor stirred  
from lying prone, with faces turned below.
- 73 'My soul hath to the pavement cleaved!' I heard  
their voices uttering with such deep sighs,  
that one could hardly understand the word.

- 76 'O ye elect of God, whose agonies  
are made by justice and by hope less grim,  
direct us where the losty stairs uprise.'
- 79 'Come ye exempt from lying prone of limb,  
and wish to find the road with little stay,  
let your right hand be ever tow'rd the rim.'
- 82 So prayed the Poet, and from little way  
before so came reply; whence I detected  
that hidden thing the speaker failed to say,
- 85 And then mine eyes unto my Lord directed:  
whereat with cheerful sign he gave consent  
to what the look of my desire expected.
- 88 When I could act according to my bent,  
I said, and stood above that being there,  
whose words already rendered me intent:
- 91 'Spirit, whose weeping ripens thee to bear  
fruit without which to God is no returning,  
suspend awhile for me thy greater care.'
- 94 Who wast thou? why your backs thus upward turning?  
when I go yon whence moved my living feet,  
can I do aught to satisfy thy yearning?
- 97 'Shalt learn,' said he, 'why Heaven esteems it meet  
we turn our backs to it; but meanwhile know  
I was successor to Saint Peter's seat.'
- 100 'Twixt Sestri and Chiavari doth flow  
a river fair, whose title of renown  
springs from my race. A month sufficed to show
- 103 How heavy the Great Mantle weighs on one  
who seeks to guard it from the miry street,  
so that all other burdens seem but down.
- 106 My own conversion came, ah me! full late;  
but, having been created Pastor at Rome,  
I grew aware that life is mere deceit.
- 109 There for the longing heart I found no home,  
nor in that life a lostier ascent;  
so love of this sprang up in me therefrom.
- 112 Till then I was a spirit malcontent,  
alien from God, devoted all to gain,  
whence thou beholdest here my punishment.'

- 15 The effect of avarice is here made plain  
    in purging of converted souls: upon  
        the Mountain nowhere is more bitter pain.
- 18 Even as our eye was not uplifted yon  
    to Heaven, but fixed upon the things of earth,  
        so Justice here has sunk it earthward down.
- 21 As avarice quenched our love to all of worth  
    so that our power of doing good was spent,  
        so Justice binds us here in utter dearth
- 24 Of freedom on this ledge, thus impotent:  
    so long as please our Father just and good,  
        so long we stay immobile and distent.'
- 27 I had knelt down, and would have fain pursued  
    the conversation, but he seemed to know  
        by hearing, of my reverent attitude:
- 30 'What cause,' said he, 'has bowed thee downward so?'  
    And I: 'By reason of your Dignity  
        my upright conscience urged the posture low.'
- 33 'Make straight thy legs; rise, brother!' answered he,  
    'err not; because I fellow-service hold  
        under one Power with others and with thee.
- 36 If thou that holy Gospel word of old  
    which saith, 'They neither marry,' ever weighed,  
        why thus I speak thou mayst full well behold.
- 39 Now go: I would not have thee longer stayed,  
    for while thou tarriest my tears I stay,  
        whereby I ripen that which thou hast said.
- 42 I have a nicce there named Alagia,  
    good in herself, if but our family  
        by ill example lead her not astray:
- 45 And she alone is left to pray for me.'

## NOTES

*Fourth Terrace for purgation of the slothful in spirit. Before ~~the~~  
of the third day: Dante's Dream.*

ll. 1-6. A combination of stars appearing in the eastern sky a little before sunrise at this season when the sun is in the Ram.

ll. 7 ff. This woman, whatever her name, is the original of that monster who is 'of so frightful mien as to be hated needs but to be seen.'

l. 22. Dante, who knew Homer only by tradition and comment, perhaps confuses the Siren with Calypso.

ll. 28 ff. There is dramatic contrast between this dream of Virgil's negligence and his real watchfulness.

ll. 31-3. This description of the Siren and that of Satan at the close of the Inferno are the two cases where the supposed requirements of the hateful allegory deface the beauty of the Poem, like pustules upon a fair face. As we compare the *Divine Comedy* with other medieval poems the wonder grows that this Poet, alone among a host, was able with such methods and such materials to make Beauty triumph so signally. How soon, at the beginning of this Cantica, does dead Poesy arise again! Spenser, imitating this passage in the stripping of Duccio, gloats and stares where Dante bids us look and pass (*Fair Queene*, I. 8, stanzas 46-9).

l. 43. The voice of an Angel who stands at the entrance of the passage from the terrace of spiritual sloth (*acedia*) to that of avarice and prodigality.

ll. 61-6. A significant image from falconry. At call of the falconer announcing the appearance of the game, the famished hawk looks down at her feet fastened to the perch by jesses, and impatiently bates to be loosed for flight, which she performs in a series of circlings. Falconry was considered the pre-eminently *royal* sport. Here the Eternal King exhibits the lure of the great circles far above; man is no longer to look down at his feet but to use them for a start towards the lure to which he yearns to soar. Dante draws comparisons and metaphors from hawking scarcely less frequently than does Shakespeare, and quite as effectively.

l. 69. That is he went up through the cleft in the rock until he came out upon the circle of the Fifth Cornice.

l. 70. Fifth Terrace: Purgation of Avarice and Prodigality.

l. 73. Needless to say, Dante uses the *Vulgata*, where this reading is found (Psalm cxviii. 25). In King James's version it

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxix, and the reading 'cleaveth unto the dust', less to the purpose. Those whose hearts are fixed upon earthly goods keep looking down until they are drawn down to the pavement, so that they are fain to use that as a bed which should be only a passageway. These penitents would fain be looking with the Poet up to the lure of the Eternal King, but are compelled to turn their backs to all the glory of the heavens and to wash with their tears the unsympathetic pavement.

ll. 81. Turning to the right, their right hands would be on the outside, 'where borders the void' (*ore confina il vano*, Canto L. 22). In Purgatory they turn always to the right, just as in Hell their movement was, as a rule, to the left.

ll. 82-7. Virgil had asked the way to the next ascent—that to the Sixth Cornice. In the answer, 'If ye come free from lying prone,' Dante had detected something unspoken which he wished to probe. He had already heard them sighing, rather than saying, 'My soul hath to the pavement cleaved!' but was not yet aware that this lying with faces to the ground was symbol of their expiation. A wistful look is sufficient to communicate his desire to the Master who discerns his thoughts, as we have often seen. The common interpretation of line 84 is that the thing hidden is the front part of the spirits' bodies. The more significant interpretation I have adopted is that suggested by the subtle and scholarly Torracca.

ll. 97 ff. Adrian V, who was pope for little more than a month in July and August of 1276, was of the great Fieschi family of Genoa, who were lords of the rich valley of the Intella and its affluents, chief among them the Lavagna. Near the little town of Lavagna are the church and palace built by Pope Innocent IV, uncle of Adrian. The mournful words are those of a man who has spent a lifetime in pursuit of a prize which turns to dust and ashes in his grasp.

ll. 133 ff. The saying of Christ, 'They neither marry nor are given in marriage,' is supposed to symbolize the union of Christ and the Church. He is no longer the proxy of the Spouse of the Bride.

l. 141. His tears ripen fruit meet for repentance: the allusion to lines 91-2. There Dante had addressed him with the usual 'thou', 'thee'. In line 131 he changes to the 'your' used in addressing those of greatly superior station.

l. 142. Wife of the Malaspina who befriended the Poet in 1306. The speaker leaves Dante to infer why the lady is mentioned. See close of Canto viii.

## CANTO XX

*The Founder of a Great Royal House*

- 1 Counter to better will strives will in vain:  
whence I, for his content, with discontent  
dry from the water drew the sponge again.
- 4 I moved, and with my Leader onward went  
along the cliff through gaps none occupy,  
as by a wall hugging the battlement;
- 7 Because that folk distilling through the eye  
the ill wherewith the world is all possessed,  
on the other side too near the margin lie.
- 10 Thou old She-Wolf, may curses on thee rest,  
that more than all the other beasts hast prey,  
because thy hungry maw gapes hollowest!
- 13 O Heaven, in whose revolving, people say,  
conditions are transmuted here below,  
when comes he who shall drive this wolf away?
- 16 We went along with paces few and slow,  
and I attentive to the utterance  
of shadows weeping and lamenting so;
- 19 When on in front of us I heard, by chance,  
'O blessed Mary!'—even as makes her moan  
a childing woman; and in continuance.
- 22 'What poverty was thine may well be known  
by thy poor entertainment at the inn  
where thou didst lay thy holy burden down.'
- 25 Then: 'Good Fabricius, who wouldest win  
the meed of virtue linked with poor estate,  
far rather than great opulence with sin!'
- 28 These words were of delight to me so great,  
that I pushed on, more knowledge to possess  
of that soul whence they seemed to emanate.
- 31 It went on speaking of the largesses  
of Nicholas to the girls, their maidenhood  
thus leading in the path of righteousness.
- 34 'O soul abounding in report so good,  
tell who thou wast, and why alone,' I said,  
'by thee these worthy praises are renewed?'

- Thy words shall have a meed well merited,  
if I return to finish the brief race  
of mortal life that tow'rd the end is sped.'
- 'I'll tell thee, not that I from yonder place  
may hope relief,' he said, 'but since there shoot  
forth from thee ere thy death such gleams of grace.
- I was of that malignant plant the root,  
shadowing so all Christian lands that they  
yield niggard harvesting of wholesome fruit.
- But ah! if Bruges and Ghent and Lille and Douay  
were potent, there would light on it swift doom;  
and this of Him who judges all I pray.
- I was called there Hugh Capet: from me come  
the Louises and Philips every one  
who recently in France hold masterdom.
- A mere Parisian butcher called me son.  
When ceased the ancient monarchs to exist,  
save one, betaken unto orders dun,
- Then found I tightly clenched within my fist  
the bridle of the realm, with power that goes  
with multitude of friends, and new acquaint;
- So to the widowed diadem arose  
the head of mine own son; from whom took birth  
the consecrated bones of all of those.
- Till the Great Dowry of Provence caused dearth  
of shame among the kith and kin of me,  
they did no harm, although of little worth.
- Began by fraud and by rapacity  
their rapine then; and after, for amends,  
took Ponthieu, Normandy, and Gascony.
- Charles came to Italy, and, for amends,  
made Conradin a victim; then a prey  
of Thomas, thrust to Heaven, for amends.
- I see a time, not distant from this day,  
that shall lead forth another Charles from France  
both him and his the better to betray.
- Unarmed he goes alone, but with the lance  
wherewith Iscariot jested, and that same  
within the bursting paunch of Florence plants.

- 76 He thence not any land, but sin and shame  
 shall win, so much the heavier therethrough  
 that he the lighter reckons all such blame.
- 79 The other, plucked once from his ship, I view  
 vending his daughter in the market place,  
 as corsairs with the other bondmaids do.
- 82 O Avarice, since thou hast brought my race  
 to hold its issue at so cheap a rate,  
 what further canst thou do for our disgrace?
- 85 That past and future ill appear less great,  
 I see the Fleur-de-Lis Alagna gain,  
 and in His Vicar Christ incarcerate.
- 88 I see how there they mock Him yet again,  
 I see the vinegar and gall renew,  
 and between living thieves I see Him slain.
- 91 I see so pitiless the Pilate new  
 that, yet unsated, he without decree  
 into the Temple steers his greedy crew.
- 94 When, O my Lord, shall I rejoice to see  
 the vengeance that doth in thy counsels hide,  
 calming thine anger in thy secrecy?
- 97 What I was saying of that only bride  
 of the Holy Spirit, prompting thee to pray  
 some comment of me, that is still replied
- 100 To all our orisons while lasts the day;  
 but in the place thereof, when night comes on  
 we ring the changes on a counter-lay:
- 103 We tell the tale then of Pygmalion  
 who traitor, thief, and parricide was made  
 by gluttony for gold; and harp upon
- 106 Poor Midas, how he covetously prayed,  
 and what fulfilment followed to his bane.  
 wherefore men laugh for ever at his greed.
- 109 We all record then Achæan the insane,  
 who seems, because he took the accursed thing,  
 wrung by the wrath of Joshua again;
- 112 Sapphira with her spouse to judgement bring;  
 then praise the hoof-beats Heliodorus bore;  
 and Polymnestor's shame doth all enring

- The Mountain, for the murdered Polydore;  
lastly we cry: "Tell us, for thou must know,  
Crassus, the savour of the golden ore!"
- Sometimes we speak, one loud, another low,  
according as affection may be spurred  
to make the pace of speaking fast or slow;
- Wherefore, if I alone erewhile was heard  
citing the good whereof we tell by day,  
none else at hand was lifting up the word.
- Departed from him, we had gone our way,  
and on the thoroughfare I spent my breath  
to overcome it far as in me lay,
- When now behold! the Mountain shuddereth  
as to its fall; whence over me is driven  
a chill, as over him who goes to death.
- Such shock was surely not to Delos given  
before Latona couched therein, to be  
delivered there of the twin eyes of Heaven.
- Uprose a pæan simultaneously  
such that toward me drew the Master good,  
saying: 'Fear not while I am guiding thee.'
- 'Glory in the highest to God!' that multitude  
chanted, as I from neighbours comprehended,  
of whom the pæan might be understood.
- We listened motionless, with breath suspended,  
like the poor shepherds first that song perceiving,  
till ceased the quaking, and the singing ended.
- Thereon the holy thoroughfare retrieving,  
we eyed the shades recumbent in that spot  
who had returned now to their wonted grieving.
- Never did ignorance yet feud so hot  
wage with my passionate desire to know,  
if here my memory be deluded not,
- As now in thought seemed battling to and fro:  
nor yet for hurry any question daring,  
nor of myself discerning aught there, so
- Timid and pensive went I onward faring.

## NOTES

*Third day: morning hours. Fifth Terrace, where Acarice is present.*  
*Hugh Capet surveys the history of his dynasty in France, predicting the betrayal of Dante's party in Florence by Charles of Valois (brother of Philip the Fair), as well as the outrage done to the Pope at the suppression of the Templars by Philip.*

ll. 10-15. This terrible Wolf appeared to the Poet at the beginning. The Hound who shall expel the Wolf typifies the future way of salvation from the evils attending the pursuit of riches. Cf. *Inferno* i. 88-111.

ll. 19 ff. Examples of the corresponding virtue.

l. 25. Refused the bribes of Pyrrhus.

l. 32. St. Nicholas threw dowries into their windows to save them from dishonour.

ll. 43-52. Hugh Capet: founder of the dynasty now the base of France, Flanders, Italy. His father would be called today a great rancher or 'packer'. Dante was soon to see the vengeance here invoked upon Philip the Fair, who was compelled to concede the independence of the Flemings.

l. 61. Provence came to the French crown by the marriage of Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, to Beatrice, daughter of Count Raymond Berenger (1246). For Count Raymond and his daughters, cf. *Paradiso* vi. 133, and *Purgatorio* vii. 127-9.

ll. 65-9. Charles of Anjou did to death the last of the Hohenstaufen and (so Dante supposed) St. Thomas Aquinas. The repetition of the rhyming phrase, 'for amends', puts poison on the arrows which he here proceeds to shoot. The emendation ('per vicenda' in line 67) by which a modern editor (Vandelli) blunts the point of this terrific irony, is deplorable. There is a similar repetition of a rhyme-word for especial emphasis in *Paradiso* xxx. 95-9.

ll. 70-8. Charles of Valois, whose nickname was Sainctete (Lackland). Brother of one of the most mischievous of kings, he left no very good reputation. Although never a king, the royal House of Valois proceeds from him. Old Villani records a popular saying: 'Messer Carlo came to Tuscany to make peace and left the land at war; he went to Sicily to make war and wrought a shameful peace.'

l. 79. Charles, the second king in Naples of the house of Anjou (called 'the cripple of Jerusalem', *Paradiso* xix).

ll. 85-90. The outrage done to Pope Boniface by agents of Philip the Fair. Villani gives a full, vivid account of the proceedings of Sciarra Colonna and Guillaume de Nogaret upon

izing Boniface in his retreat at Alagna (Anagni), his native town, in September, 1303: 'And coming into his presence Sciarra and the other foes reviled him with villainous words, testing him with such of his household as had stayed. Among those who reviled him was William of Nogaret who had managed the capture on behalf of the King of France, and who now threatened to take him in fetters to Lyons on the hone, and there to have him deposed and condemned in general council.' Finally, after the brutal soldiery had pillaged the palace for three days, the stout townsmen rallied and drove out the invaders, compelling Sciarra and Nogaret to fly for their lives. But the shock was too severe for the proud old man, who went mad and died at Rome a month later. Cf. especially *Paradiso xxvii. 22*, and the note there.

ll. 91-93. The destruction of the Order of the Temple by Philip. Dr. Döllinger considered the October day of 1307 when the great *coup* was carried out against the Order of Templars as in its consequences one of the most fatal in human annals. By all accounts, the proceeding was prompted by rapacity and carried out by help of the Inquisition with refinements of cruelty beyond the imagination of barbarians. Within the compass of a few tercets (ll. 67-93) the Poet here condenses the most illuminating and trenchant 'footnote to history' ever penned by a contemporary. Cf. Browning's *The Heretic's Tragedy*.

l. 97. The only bride of the Holy Spirit is Mary, whom the shade was celebrating as Dante approached: ll. 19-24.

ll. 99-102. In the daytime they praise the virtue; at night they stigmatize the vice.

l. 103. First told by Venus to Aeneas (*Aeneid*, Bk. I, from line 340).

l. 109. For Achæan's crime and punishment see the whole of the seventh chapter of *Joshua*.

l. 113. 2 Maccabees iii. 25. (The other examples can readily be found.)

l. 117. The story was that the Parthians, having defeated and killed Crassus, poured molten gold into the mouth and sent the head to their king, so contriving, although unlettered, to compose allegorical poetry.

l. 130. Delos had been, according to the poets, a floating island, but not more unstable than the Mountain now appears. As the birthplace of the Sun-god and the Moon-goddess it was peculiarly sacred; from it Diana takes the name Delia (as in Canto xxix, l. 78) and Dante elsewhere terms Apollo, Delius.

## CANTO XXI

*The Poet Statius*

- 1 The natural thirst unsatisfied for aye  
     save with that water for whose boon was fain  
         the lowly woman of Samaria,
- 4 Tormented me, and by the encumbered lane,  
     haste goaded me behind my Leader on,  
         and I was grieving for that righteous pain;
- 7 When lo! in manner even as Luke sets down  
     that in the way to twain did Christ appear,  
         from the tomb's mouth of late arisen and gone.
- 10 A shade appeared and came behind us where  
     we were intent the prostrate crowd to view,  
         and spoke to us before we were aware,
- 13 Saying: 'My brothers, peace be unto you.'  
     And Virgil, turning with me suddenly,  
         gave back the word of greeting that is due.
- 16 'May the true court in peace establish thee  
     in council of the blest,' then Virgil said,  
         'though to eternal exile dooming me.'
- 19 'How!' said that spirit, while we onward sped,  
     'if ye are shades God will on high not deign,  
         who has so far up by His stairway led?'
- 22 'But note the marks,' my Teacher said again,  
     'which this man bears as doth the Angel write,  
         well shalt thou see he with the good must reign.'
- 25 But because she who spins both day and night,  
     drew off not yet his distaff-full of twine  
         which Clotho winds compact for every wight,
- 28 The soul of him, thy sister-soul and mine,  
     in coming upward, could not come alone,  
         not seeing in the fashion of our cyne.
- 31 I, therefore, from wide-throated Hell was drawn  
     to show him the way onward, and shall show  
         as far as by my school it can be done.
- 34 But tell us why the Mountain, if thou know,  
     so quaked erewhile, and all appeared to cry  
         with one voice, to its wave-washed foot below?'

So questioning, he hit the needle's eye  
of my desire, and by the hope withal  
my thirst was made less hard to satisfy.

The spirit began: 'There is nothing here at all  
not subject to the holy ordination  
of the Mountain, or that is exceptional.'

This place is free from every permutation;  
in what from Heaven back to itself doth flow,  
and in naught else, there may be found causation:

For falls not any rain or hail or snow,  
nor can the dew nor yet can hoarfrost lie  
above the little triple stairway; no

Clouds ever thicken here nor rarefy,  
lightning is not, nor Thaumas' daughter fleet  
who changes region oft in yonder sky;

Parched vapour does not overtop the seat  
of the three steps I touched upon just now,  
whereon the Vicar of Peter sets his feet.

It trembles more or less, one may allow,  
beneath; but up here never trembled through  
wind prisoned in the ground, I know not how.

It trembles when some soul feels pure and true  
for setting forward, freely up aloof  
ascending, whereupon such shouts pursue.

Of purity the will alone gives proof:  
quite free for change of cloister, this intent  
takes by surprise the soul of her behoof.

She first wills well, but divine government  
sets will against desire, which, as before  
it craved for sinning, craves for punishment.

And I, who have five hundred years and more  
beneath this torment lain, but now could trace  
free will for threshold of a better door.

Hence didst thou feel the quake, and spirits of grace  
didst hear along the Mountain celebrate  
the Lord,—ah! may He send them up apace.'

He said; and since joy is proportionate  
in drinking, with the thirst to be allayed,  
my gain by him I could not say how great.

- 76 'I see the net now,' my wise Leader said,  
     'that snares you here, and how ye are set free,  
     wherfore it quakes, and wherat glad ye are made.'
- 79 Now tell me who thou wast, I beg of thee,  
     and in thy words I pray thee be it told  
     why thou layest here so many a century.'
- 82 'When the good Titus in the time of old,  
     helped by the King Supreme, avenged each woe,  
     whence issued forth the blood by Judas sold,
- 85 With name most durable and most renowned  
     I yonder lived,' that spirit answering said,  
     'and passing fame, but not yet faith had found.
- 88 So sweet a music from my soul was shed  
     that from Toulouse Rome beckoned me away,  
     where I deserved brows myrtle-garlanded.
- 91 There people call me Statius to this day:  
     of Thebes I sang, and great Achilles' might,  
     but with my second load fell by the way.
- 94 The seeds that raised my genius to its height  
     were sparks from that celestial flame shot forth,  
     whence more than a thousand have been set alight.
- 97 The *Aeneid*, I mean, that mothered me from birth,  
     the nurse that suckled me in poesy;  
     without it were I not a drachma worth.
- 100 To have lived when Virgil lived, would I agree  
     to penance of one sun more than I owe,  
     ere from my place of banishment set free.'
- 103 Turned Virgil to me, he discoursing so,  
     with 'Be thou silent,' in his tacit glance;  
     but there are limits to what will can do:
- 106 For tears and laughter are such pursuivants  
     upon the passions out of which they rise,  
     that truest will has weakest vigilance.
- 109 I could but smile, with meaning in mine eyes;  
     wherat the shadow paused, and looked me straig...  
     into the eye, where most expression lies.
- 112 'So mayst thou well such labour consummate,'  
     he said, 'tell wherfore I but now descried  
     a laughter-flash thy face irradiate?'

- 3 Now am I caught on this and the other side:  
    one bids 'Be still,' and the other 'Speak to me!'  
    whence I was comprehended when I sighed.
- 3 'Thou needst,' my Master said, 'not fearful be  
    to speak, but tell, and let thy words attest  
    what he besought with such anxiety.'
- 1 'O ancient soul,' said I, 'thou marvellest  
    perchance, because my smile thou sawest shine;  
    but I will move more wonder in thy breast!
- 4 This one who guides on high these eyes of mine,  
    is that Virgilius who made thee fit  
    to sing concerning men and gods divine.
- 7 If else thou deemedst of my smiling, quit  
    the untrue suspicion: deem what thou hast said  
    to be the veritable cause of it.'
- 10 To kiss my Teacher's feet he bent his head;  
    'Brother,' the Master urged with tenderness,  
    'do not; thou seest me like thyself a shade.'
- 33 Then Statius rising said: 'Now canst thou guess  
    the love that warms me to thee, how intense,  
    when I can so forget our emptiness,
- 36 Treating a shadow as a thing of sense.'

## NOTES

*Terrace of the Avaricious: forenoon of the third day.*

ll. 1-3. Dante begins his *Convivio* with 'that buoyant and immortal sentence' (Santayana) of the master of those who know: 'all men naturally desire to know'; and goes on to explain that this is because, as all things crave their perfection, the perfection of man consists in knowing. Here he suggests that such thirst is quenched only by draughts from the inward well-spring of everlasting life (Saint John iv. 5-15).

l. 18. In this Canto, as in Canto vii and elsewhere, the contrast is startling between the theological disgrace of Virgil and the human honour which is pre-eminently his due. The antinomy is of course hopelessly insoluble; but those who press this point are too prone to forget that we are dealing, after all, with theology only as it appears in suspension in the poetry. The genuineness of the Poet's faith makes more poignant the dramatic conflict in which we participate on seeing these redeemed souls doing homage to one who was believed to be lost.

ll. 43-5. These lines form the theme which is developed in the lines that follow. That which comes from Heaven and is received back into it is the soul; not physical but spiritual causation is to be looked for here. Below the three symbolic steps at the entrance to Purgatory proper (described in Canto ix), the system of nature as set forth by philosophers holds good: there for example earthquakes are caused, as Aristotle explains, by wind somehow shut within the ground; there rain and fog are caused by humid vapour and winds by dry vapour. But here only deeper causes obtain. In fact the Mountain quakes at the deliverance of each soul from penitential sufferings. Such deliverance, we are further instructed, takes place whenever will and desire are finally brought into harmony. There are two kinds of will, absolute and conditioned. Will absolute always seeks the Good; conditioned will, however, may be led astray, in the exercise of its freedom, to the choice of apparent good—that is to evil choices, leading to sin. Now this conditioned will causes the soul to desire to continue its painful process of purgation until, perhaps after hundreds of circlings of the sun, it is surprised by a sudden sense of purity caused by perfect harmony of will and desire.

l. 50. Iris, the rainbow.

*ll.* 52-7. Aristotle's explanations of the causes of wind, earthquakes, lightning, and thunder were accepted not only by poets but by philosophers centuries after Dante's time. Francis Bacon, in the 'Inquisition Concerning the Winds', speaks of 'some that are subterraneal and underground . . . getting an issue by earthquakes'. Cf. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, 1046-7.

*I.* 58. The soul desires its punishment until wholly purified of its sinful disposition. (See note to Canto xvii. *I.* 85)

*ll.* 82-4. *Paradiso* vi. 91-3; vii. 19-51.

*I.* 85. The name of Poet.

*I.* 93. The Poem about Achilles is the 'second load'.

*I.* 108. Norton translates literally, 'that in the most truthful they least follow the will'. The sincerest men are most apt to betray their feelings.

*ll.* 130-6. But in Canto vi we saw Sordello embrace Virgil! It is unsafe to assume that the Poet had forgotten this detail. Some purpose must be supposed. Possibly in the former case Virgil was taken by surprise, while here his sense of fitness declines the embrace of one who is on the threshold of a world where affection for the lost (such was the theory) is cancelled.

The thirty-four lines following Statius' declaration that, for the sake of acquaintance with the living Virgil, he would gladly have delayed for one circle of the sun (i.e., for a year) his release from the banishment of Purgatory, set dramatically before us an exceedingly sweet and tender scene. In subtle insight which it is now the fashion to term 'psychological', in humour and pathos, in swift seizure of the essential and corresponding suppression of unconcerning things, in mastery of dialogue, Dante here transcends all classic models known to him. This Canto is not as celebrated as some of the more powerful passages of the Inferno, but to those who have a quiet taste for delicate draughtsmanship its appeal is sure.

## CANTO XXII

*The Three Poets converse as they walk*

- 1 Behind us had we left the Angel now  
     who up to the sixth round had turned our quest,  
     having erased a stigma from my brow;
- 4 And had announced to us that they are Blest  
     who long for righteousness in all they do,—  
     but saying it with 'thirst' without the rest.
- 7 And, lighter than at other passes through,  
     following those swift spirits up above,  
     I went without fatigue. Then did renew
- 10 Virgil his speaking: 'Worth-enkindled love  
     can kindle in us love reciprocal,  
     its ardour being revealed. In proof whereof,
- 13 Among us when descended Juvenal  
     down into the Infernal Limbo, where  
     he made thy feeling known to me withal.
- 16 Never did man to unseen person bear  
     more love than did my heart toward thee bend.  
     so that now short to me will seem the stair.
- 19 But tell me, and forgive me as a friend  
     if I give rein to overconfidence,  
     and talk we heart to heart now to the end:
- 22 Oh, how could Avarice find residence  
     possibly, in a bosom such as thine,  
     replete with wisdom through thy diligence?"
- 25 These words made Statius at first incline  
     to smile a little; then replied he thus:  
     'Each word of thine to me is Love's dear sign.'
- 28 Often indeed do things appear to us  
     that offer for suspicion grounds deceiving,  
     since their real causes are not obvious.
- 31 Thy question proves it to be thy believing  
     that Greed in the other life had been my curse,  
     perchance because of the round where I was grieving.
- 34 Know, then, that my offence was the reverse  
     of Avarice; my prodigality  
     thousands of courses of the moon amerce.

- 37 And if I had not, pondering upon thee,  
set right my conduct, misdirected first,  
where thou exclaim'st against humanity
- 40 Almost in wrath: 'To what, unholy thirst  
for gold, dost thou not mortal craving bring?'  
I should be rolling in the tilts accurst.
- 43 Then saw I that the hands too wide of wing  
might be in spending, and repented thence  
of that and every other evil thing.
- 46 Because of ignorance of this offence,  
how many shall arise devoid of hair,  
in life and death bereft of penitence!
- 49 And know that sin, in opposition square  
rebutting other sin, dries up its green  
together with the opposing trespass there.
- 52 Wherefore if I, to purge myself, have been  
with those who weep their Avarice in throngs,  
I suffered it for contradictory sin.'
- 55 'Now when thou sangest of the cruel wrongs  
of war that wrought Jocasta's double woe,'  
the Singer said of the Bucolic Songs,
- 58 'The chords there touched with Clio do not show  
thee yet as of that Faith a devotee,  
for want whereof good works are not known.'
- 61 What *candles* or what *sun*, if so it be,  
so pierced thy darkness that thy sails were spread  
after the Fisher of the eternal sea?
- 64 'Thou first directedst me,' he answering said,  
'Parnassus-ward, to drink upon its height,  
then on my way to God thy light was shed.'
- 67 Thou diddest like to him who walks by night,  
bearing the torch, not for his proper good,  
but to the after-comers giving light,
- 70 When saidest thou: "The world is all renewed;  
Justice returns, and man's primeval spring,  
and out of Heaven descends another brood."
- 73 Poet was I, then Christian, following  
thy guidance; but that thou the better view  
my sketch, I set my hand at colouring.

- 76 The world by now was teeming with the true religion, by the sowers of the Lord Eternal, scattered every country through;
- 79 And thy words, touched upon above, concurred with the new gospellers in such a wise that I became a hearer of the Word.
- 82 They came to seem so holy in mine eyes then, when Domitian persecuted sore, that tears of mine accompanied their cries;
- 85 And while I lingered upon yonder shore I succoured them, whose upright manners made all other sects seem worthless; and before ss I, poetizing, yet the Greeks had led far as the Theban streams, baptized was I; but hid my Christian faith, because afraid,
- 91 Long while appearing Pagan outwardly; and for this lukewarmness I circling went the Fourth Round more than the fourth century.
- 94 Do therefore thou who madest evident that good wherein I find so great reward," while we have something left of the ascent,
- 97 Tell me where Terence is, our elder bard, Caecilius, Plautus, Varius, if thou know: tell me if these are damned, and in what ward?
- 100 'These, Persius, I, and many another,'—so answered my Guide,—'are with that Greek confined whom most the Muses suckled long ago,
- 103 In the first girdle of the Prison Blind. We often talk about the Mountain where forever haunt the nurses of our kind.
- 106 Euripides and Antiphon are there, Simonides and Agathon and more Grecians who once with laurel decked their hair
- 109 There see we people sung by thee of yore, Antigone, Deiphile, Argeia, and there Ismene, mournful evermore.
- 112 There see we her who pointed out Langeia; there is Tiresias' daughter, Thetis there, and with her sisters there Deidameia.'

- 115 By this time silent both the poets were,  
eager to gaze about them far and wide,  
from the walls liberated, and the stair;
- 118 And four of the Day's handmaids now abide  
behind, the fifth still pointing up the bright  
horn of the chariot-pole; whereon my Guide:
- 121 'Methinks it now behoves us turn the right  
shoulder toward the outer verge, intent  
to round, as we are wont to do, the height.'
- 124 By custom in such manner led, we went  
our way with the less fear of going wrong,  
because that noble spirit gave assent.
- 127 In front they, and alone went I along  
behind, hearing their words, which gave to me  
intelligence about the craft of song.
- 130 But their kind talk was broken by a tree  
that midway in the road we encountered now,  
with fruitage smelling sweet and gratefully.
- 133 As fir-tree tapers upward, bough on bough,  
so this one appeared downward tapering,  
methinks that none thereon might climbing go.
- 136 There where our way was closed, a water spring  
down from the lofty cliff was falling clear,  
and on the upper foliage scattering.
- 139 The poets twain unto the tree drew near,  
whereon a voice cried out the branches through:  
'Dearth of this viand ye shall have to bear.'
- 142 'Mary was more concerned,' it said anew,  
'to grace the wedding feast with plenitude,  
than for her mouth which now entreats for you.'
- 145 Of water the old Roman womanhood  
were satisfied to drink; and Daniel nursed  
wisdom within him by despising food.
- 148 Golden in beauty was the world at first;  
to appetite it made the acorn sweet,  
and every brook like nectar to the thirst.
- 151 Honey and locusts were the only meat  
that John the Baptist in the desert knew;  
whence now he is in glory, and so great
- 154 As by the Gospel is revealed to you.'

## NOTES

*Third day: late forenoon. Ascent to the Sixth Terrace: Virgil <sup>as</sup>  
Statius with Dante.*

ll. 4-6. For the rest cf. close of Canto xxiv. The word 'thirst' is supposed to be appropriate to the souls who are repenting of Avarice, transferring their thirst for gold to a worthy object. To 'hunger after righteousness' is appropriate to the intemperate in food and drink, so that this part of the beatitude is reserved for the Angel of the Sixth Cornice.

ll. 31-45. The passage translated in lines 40-41 is the well-known exclamation of Aeneas (*Aeneid* iii. 56):

'Quid non mortalia pectora cogis  
Auri sacra fames.'

Just how Dante interpreted the Virgilian adjective *sacra*, which he merely repeats, is a moot point. The most scholarly of the early commentators, Benvenuto Rambaldi, who lectured on Dante at Bologna a half century after the death of the Poet, rightly paraphrases the words *auri sacra fames* as meaning 'O execrabilis cupiditas auri'—accursed craving for gold. P. Francesco d'Ovidio, discussing the passage at length, takes refuge in the assumption that Dante misunderstood the words as meaning 'holy or just desire', with reference to blameless acquisition and dispensing; and Professor Grandgent, in his useful edition, follows this interpretation. These are doubtless good authorities, but Dante himself is an even better, and to believe that he so misunderstood his favourite poet seems indeed an expedient to which one should resort with great reluctance. How then could an invective against greed for gold be supposed to have had so powerful an influence upon one addicted to the contrary vice of prodigality? Obviously one who spends too much must sooner or later be driven to seek, by hook or by crook, the means wherewith to spend. Thus prodigality meets and collides with greed, as in the jousts described in Canto vii of the *Inferno*, and referred to here in line 42.

There is another consideration which seems to have been overlooked. A man's prodigality may, by pauperizing beneficiaries, converting servants into parasites and dependents into sycophants, prove the cause of greed in others. Considered in this light, the unholy thirst for gold is bred in the breasts of those who are weakened or corrupted by inconsiderate boorishness.

he suggestion then is that Dante wishes to show how the eyes of Statius could have been opened to the fact that lavish spending and random gifts were making him accessory to the ice which he most detested. The magic of the Poet gave Statius a sudden glimpse of himself as a very breeder of avarice! It may well be that a man of genius, who had begun to perceive how scanty a harvest his liberal hand was reaping—seeds and thistles for corn—might have been awakened to profitable thought by Virgil's words, without wresting them from their true meaning. Such is, I believe, the true and deep interpretation of a passage which has been considered one of the most difficult in the whole *Divine Comedy*.

ll. 46-8. For the hairless or cropped crowns of the prodigals see note to *Inferno* vii, l. 39.

l. 63. Saint Peter, as at end of *Paradiso* xviii.

ll. 70-2. The Cumæan Sibyl, Eclogue iv. This eclogue had from very early times been interpreted as prophetic of Christ. Dante's use of the passage is therefore sanctioned by venerable tradition.

l. 91. In the early ages of Christianity many converts concealed their faith like Joseph of Arimathea.

l. 98. Oxford text reads *Varro*.

l. 99. The tone of this question strikes the modern reader as rather cold-blooded. Here, as in the case of Cato, our Poet fails to make his redeemed soul quite *simpatico*. Considering his longing for the companionship of Virgil, the latter's enumeration of the great and noble souls confined in the 'Prison Blind' must surely awaken in Statius regret at missing so much good company! But upon this topic his lips are sealed, as ours must be.

ll. 106-8. As elsewhere mentioned, Dante knew these (and other) Greek poets only through references to them in Latin writings.

l. 112. Hypsipylē, for whose story see note to Canto xxvi, l. 94 ff.

ll. 118-20. The fifth Hour is now driving the chariot of the sun: it is about 11 o'clock.

ll. 130 ff. The emblematic fruit-tree which the gluttons cannot climb.

ll. 142-4. Mary's words, 'They have no wine,' cited in Canto xiii as an example of affectionate thought for others, are here referred to as an example of temperance. Times change! An American Sanhedrin might to-day pronounce such incitements contrary to the Constitution.

## CANTO XXIII

*Dante meets an Old Boon Companion*

- \* Because these eyes of mine yet never stirred  
from the green foliage, like such an one  
as wastes his life to hunt the little bird,
- 4 My more than Father said to me: 'My son,  
come on now; for the time assigned had need  
to be allotted for more benison.'
- 7 Then turned I face and foot with equal speed  
after those speakers sage, so eloquent  
as made it cost me nothing to proceed.
- 10 And hearken! now both singing and lament  
grown audible: 'Open my lips, O Lord!'  
such as gave birth to grief and to content.
- 13 'O Father dear, what is it I have heard?'  
And he replied: 'Shades going to undo  
the knot, perchance, of debt they have incurred.'
- 16 Like pilgrims pensively advancing who,  
when overtaking strangers on the road,  
will look but will not linger, so here too
- 19 Up from behind, devout and silent, strode  
a crowd of souls more swiftly passing on,  
but gazing at us eagerly. They showed
- 22 Instead of eyes black caverns; very wan  
was every visage, and so hunger-pined,  
over the bone the skin was tightly drawn.
- 25 I cannot think that to such utter rind  
was shrivelled Erysichthon's dried-up cheek  
by fasting, when it most appalled his mind.
- 28 'Behold,' within me did I musing speak,  
'the folk who forfeited Jerusalem,  
when in her child Maria struck her beak.'
- 31 Each eyepit seemed a ring without the gem:  
who OMO reads in face of man, might well  
here in each countenance make out the M.
- 34 Who ever could believe that from the smell  
of apples or of water there could grow  
such craving, knowing not how this befell?

- 37 I still was wondering what pined them so,  
the cause that rendered them so scurvily  
withered and meagre being yet to know,
- 40 When, look now, from its deep skull cavity  
a spirit made its eye upon me keen,  
then cried aloud: 'What grace is this to me!'
- 43 Never should I have known him by his mien,  
but something lingered in his utterance  
that in his lineament had cancelled been.
- 46 This spark enkindled to my inward glance  
something familiar in his altered look,  
and I recalled Forese's countenance.
- 49 'Ah, do not mind,' he prayed, 'the scurf that took  
the fresh complexion of my skin away,  
nor yet the lack of flesh I have to brook,
- 52 But tell me truth of thee, and who are they,  
yon spirits twain by whom thou'rt hither led?  
Ah, tarry not, speak, speak to me, I pray!'
- 55 'Thy face, bewept by me when thou wast dead,  
gives me for weeping now no lesser rue  
beholding it disfigured so,' I said.
- 58 'By hope of Heaven, then tell what withers you:  
bid me not speak while marvelling, for ill  
one speaks, by other craving stricken through!'
- 61 And he to me: 'By the Eternal Will  
falls virtue to the water and the plant  
behind us, that emaciates me still.'
- 64 All of these people who lamenting chant,  
for being out of measure gluttonous,  
grow holy here through thirst and hunger gaunt.
- 67 Craving for food and drink is stirred in us  
by fragrance from the fruit, and from the spray  
that sprinkles over all the verdure thus.
- 70 And not once, as we circle round this way,  
but many times our penance is renewed.  
Penance I say, who solace ought to say:
- 73 For to the tree that same solicitude  
leads us, that led rejoicing Christ to cry  
"Eli," when He redeemed us with His blood.'

- 76 'Not yet five years from that day forth,' said I,  
   'when for a better world thou tookest flight,  
     Forese mine, have until now rolled by.'
- 79 If sooner ended were in thee the might  
   of sinning, than the hour had supervened  
     that weds again to God the heart contrite,
- 82 How then art thou arrived up hither, friend?  
   I thought to find thee on the slope below,  
     where time doth dissipate time amend.'
- 85 'My Nella, with her tears that overflow,  
   hath brought me,' he replied, 'so speedily  
     to drink of the sweet wormwood of this woe,
- 88 With pious prayers and tears withdrawing me  
   up from the hillside where the people wait,  
     and from the other circles setting free.
- 91 Dearer to God, and of more estimate,  
   my widow whom so well I loved, as there  
     she more alone to good is dedicate.
- 94 More modest in its dames beyond compare  
   is the Barbagia of Sardinia,  
     than the Barbagia where I left her.
- 97 O brother dear, what wilt thou have me say?  
   my foresight by a future is possessed,  
     when not yet very old shall be this day,
- 100 When warning from the pulpit is addressed  
   to the unblushing women Florentine,  
     who go about displaying paps and breast.
- 103 What Pagan women, aye, or Saracen,  
   have stood in need, to make them covered go,  
     of spiritual or other discipline?
- 106 But if these unabashed ones did but know  
   what holds in store for them the hastening sky,  
     for howling would their jaws be open now;
- 109 For if herein my foresight do not lie,  
   they will be sad ere yet his cheek have down  
     who now is quieted with lullaby.
- 112 Now brother, pray, be more concealment none:  
   look, not I only, but these people all  
     are gazing there where veilest thou the sun.'

- 115 Whence I to him: 'If thou to mind recall  
what once to one another were we two,  
the present memory will yet appall.
- 118 That one who goes in front of me withdrew  
me from that life the other day, when round  
the sister of him yonder appeared to you
- 121 (I pointed to the sun). Through the profound  
midnight he led me from the dead apart,  
with this real flesh that after him is bound.
- 124 Thence having drawn me, comforts he my heart  
to circle up the Mountain, that again  
straightens you whom the world had wrenched
- 127 He speaks of going with me until when [athwart.  
I shall be there where will be Beatrice;  
without him there must I perforce remain.
- 130 He Virgil is who sayeth to me this  
(and him I showed); that other shadow, know,  
is he for whom shook every precipice
- 133 Recently, when your Kingdom let him go.'

## NOTES

*Terrace of the Intemperate in food and drink: about noon of the third day.*

*l. 3.* This comparison is strikingly Italian, too many of Dante's countrymen still holding it good sport to spend hours in order to snare or shoot a lark, a robin, or a nightingale.

*l. 11.* This phrase of the Miserere (Psalm li. 15) is appropriate to those whose sin is here purged. The prayer is for the noble use of the lips exemplified by the Virgin Mother at the marriage at Cana. Cf. Canto xxii, ll. 142-4.

*l. 26.* Erysichthon was, according to Ovid, a Thessalian prince who, having presumed to sell a grove sacred to Ceres was punished by the goddess with such insatiable hunger that, after devouring everything else obtainable, he at last began to gnaw his own body. Would that the divinities of our sacred Sequoia groves were to-day powerful enough to protect their own!

*l. 30.* The dreadful tale is told by Josephus (*B. S.*, vi. 3, § 4).

*ll. 31-3.* The Latin word for man, *homo*, by the dropping of the aspirate, gives the Italian (*u*)omo. In a skull the eye-sockets, with the median line of the nose, compose quite accurately the capital M as then written. Thus it became a saying that the word for man in the universal language is printed on the face. In his *Urn Burial*, chapter iii, Sir Thomas Browne makes interesting comment on this passage. For another fanciful modification of the M see *Paradiso* xviii.

*ll. 49-51.* Cf. Virgil's reference to the shadowy bodies of the spirits, Canto iii, ll. 31-3. Also the recognition of Ser Brunetto, *Inferno* xv.

*l. 58.* The 'you' is plural, referring to the whole class of souls here undergoing purgation. In making this distinction, which is obvious in Italian, the translator but revives a forgotten usage of our tongue.

*ll. 72-5.* The souls rejoice in their pain as Christ rejoiced in the utter agony of the cross. Cf. Matthew xxvii. 46.

*ll. 74, 76, 78* of the text are examples of the infrequent *versi tronchi*—verses lacking the final unstressed syllable and therefore having masculine endings.

*l. 79.* If you repented only when too weak to sin more. See Belacqua's explanation, Canto iv, ll. 130-5.

ll. 94-6. The Barbagia was a wild region where the people were uncivilized. The word is a vestige of the remarkable race who gave the name 'Barbary' to a large part of North Africa where they are still called 'Berbers'.

ll. 94-111. The stormy voice of the poet-prophet speaks through Forese.

ll. 100-2. The contemporary *Ottimo Commento* confirms the facts here adverted to, although mentioning no specific instance of such ecclesiastical admonition. Villani in his history records laws regulating the dress and deportment of women, and references are found elsewhere to their breaches of decorum.

ll. 106-11. After the exile of Dante and the disastrous coming of Charles of Valois (1302), many calamities befell Florence. Before the boys who are now infants shall have reached adolescence, the mothers of Florence will be sorrowful.

ll. 115-17. Referring to a period of intimacy which Dante does not recall with pleasure. Of this the only record we have is the *tenzone* (series of six coarsely abusive sonnets) between Dante and Forese. Four of these are translated by Dante Rossetti in his *Early Italian Poets*. The originals are printed in the Oxford *Dante*, pp. 164-5. Cf. the reproaches of Beatrice and Dante's personal confession, Cantos xxx, xxxi.

l. 132. Statius has explained the spiritual cause of the earthquake, Canto xxi, ll. 40-72.

## CANTO XXIV

*Cheerful Abstainers from Good Cheer*

- 1 Neither for talking did we lag behind,  
     nor lagged our talk, but stoutly on we went,  
     like vessel urged along by favouring wind.
- 4 And shades that seemed by double death forspent,  
     beholding me alive, were all betraying  
     deep in their eyepits their astonishment.
- 7 I, going on with what I had been saying,  
     said: 'Peradventure he doth upward go,  
     for sake of some one else, with more delaying.
- 10 But tell, where is Piccarda, if thou know;  
     and mention any in this multitude  
     of note, among those gazing at me so.'
- 13 'My sister,—if most beautiful or good  
     I know not,—in her crown is triumphing  
     on high Olympus in beatitude.'
- 16 So said he first, then: 'No forbidden thing  
     is giving names here, so obliterate  
     is our resemblance by the dieting.'
- 19 This,' pointed he, 'is Bonagiunta, late  
     Bonagiunta of Lucca; and farther thence,  
     that face more than the rest emaciate,
- 22 Once used his arms the Holy Church to fence;  
     he was from Tours, and atones the Vernage wine  
     and Lake Bolsena's eels, by abstinence.'
- 25 And many another name did he assign;  
     and all seemed pleased, for not one sombre look,  
     despite the naming, saw these eyes of mine.
- 28 There saw I bite the void and hunger brook  
     Ubaldin of La Pila, and Boniface  
     who shepherded much people with his crook.
- 31 I saw Lord Marquess who of old had space  
     for drinking with less dryness at Forlì,  
     with craving still unsated ne'ertheless.
- 34 But as he does who scans selectingly,  
     so did my choice on him of Lucca fall,  
     who seemed most eager to have speech with me.'

- 37 I heard him murmur, what I know not all,  
about Gentucca, where he most was wrung  
by Justice that so withers them withal.
- 40 'O soul,' said I, 'that seemest so to long  
to speak with me, give pleasure to my ears  
and to thy heart by loosening thy tongue.'
- 43 'A maid is born, nor yet the wimple wears,  
who shall make pleasant to thee,' did he say,  
'my city, whatsoever blame it bears.'
- 46 With this my presage shalt thou go thy way;  
and did my murmur error in thee move,  
facts will explain it at some future day.
- 49 But tell me, do I speak with him who wove  
the rhymes in the new manner, that begin,  
"Ladies who have intelligence of love"?"
- 52 'I am of those who, when Love breathes within,  
take note,' I answered, 'and shape heedfully  
my cadences to those he dictates in.'
- 55 'O brother mine,' exclaimed he, 'now I see  
what bar held back from the sweet manner new  
Guittone, and the Notary, and me.'
- 58 I see distinctly how your pens pursue  
the one who dictates, following his bent;  
the which was certainly of ours untrue.
- 61 And who most looks to find them different,  
can naught else trace 'twixt one and the other style';  
and holding here his peace, he seemed content.
- 64 Even as the birds that winter by the Nile  
go flocking through the welkin now, then fly  
with quicker wing that they may go in file,
- 67 Thus all that multitude of people I  
saw turn their faces, while their steps they pressed,  
and, light by will and leanness, hastened by.
- 70 And, as a weary runner lets the rest  
of his companions go, that he may walk  
until abate the panting of his chest,
- 73 So did Forese let the holy flock  
pass by, and pausing with me, said: 'When more  
may we thus face to face together talk?'

- 76 'I know not,' said I, 'when my life is o'er,  
    though not so speedily can I arrive  
        but that my heart is sooner on the shore;  
79 Because the place where I was made alive,  
    from day to day more stripped of goodness is,  
        and seems to dismal ruin doomed to drive.'  
82 'Take heart; I see him most to blame for this  
    dragged at a horse's tail along,' said he,  
        'toward the never pardoning abyss.  
85 At each bound goes the beast more rapidly,  
    ever increasing, till it strikes amain  
        the body, and leaves it mangled hideously.  
88 Not often shall those wheels revolve again,'  
    he raised his eyes to heaven, 'ere is made clear  
        to thee, that which my words cannot explain.  
91 Now stay behind, because the time so dear  
    is in this kingdom, that too much I lose  
        going at even pace thus with thee here.'  
94 As sometimes cavalier at gallop goes  
    forth from a troop of horse, to make his worth  
        renowned by first encounter with the foes,  
97 So he with longer strides departed forth;  
    and I remained there with those two behind,  
        who were such mighty marshals here on earth.  
100 And when he had passed on so far that blind  
    to follow him mine eyes grew, as, I trow,  
        to follow on his words had been my mind,  
103 Appeared, with many a laden and living bough,  
    another apple-tree, not far away,  
        because my road curved round on it but now.  
106 Beneath were folk with lifted hands, and they  
    cried out toward the leaves, I know not what,  
        like fond and eager little ones who pray,  
109 And that one whom they pray to answers not,  
    but holds aloft and does not hide their boon,  
        that it may be more longingly besought.  
112 Then, as if disappointed, they were gone:  
    so reached we the great tree that doth deny  
        so many a tear and many an orison.

- 115 'Go your way onward without drawing nigh;  
the tree is higher up whence Eve devoured  
the fruit, and whence this plant was reared on high.'
- 118 Thus spoke some one amid the fronds embowered;  
whence Virgil, Statius, and I, close pressed  
together, moved along the cliff that towered.
- 121 'Recall those cloud-begotten ones unblest,  
who being drunken,' so it re-began,  
'strove against Theseus with their double breast;
- 124 Those Jews the draught proved weaklings, man for man,  
whence Gideon did their company disdain,  
when he went down the hills tow'rd Midian.'
- 127 Hugging the inner of the margins twain,  
concerning sins of appetite we heard,  
followed of old by miserable gain.
- 130 Then, to a solitary path transferred,  
a thousand steps and more had each of us  
wandered immersed in thought without a word.
- 133 'Ye three alone, what go ye thinking thus?'  
I started when a sudden voice so said,  
as starts from rest a creature timorous.
- 136 To see who this might be, I raised my head;  
and never yet in furnace was the hue  
of glass or metal such a glowing red,
- 139 As one I saw who spoke: 'So please it you  
to mount aloft, here must ye turn aside:  
this way goes he who would his peace pursue.'
- 142 To look on him was sight to me denied:  
whence turned I in my Teacher's steps to fare,  
like one who goes with hearing for his guide.
- 145 And as, from herbs and flowers, the harbinger  
of early dawn, the zephyr of the May  
steals odours that make balmy all the air,
- 148 Even such a breeze I felt directly play  
upon my brow, and felt myself caressed  
by plumage breathing of ambrosia.
- 151 And heard proclaimed thereafter: 'They are blest  
whom Grace so much illumines, that appetite  
kindles not overmuch within their breast,
- 154 Hungering ever in accord with right.'

## NOTES

*Third day; early afternoon. Terrace of the Intemperate.*

I. 10. We shall meet her in the Heaven of the Moon (*Paradiso* iii). The reader is urged to read Longfellow's notes on the present Canto,

I. 19. Benvenuto pronounces Bonagiunta a man of honour and an orator, a facile rhymester but a more facile wine-bibber. This poet probably died but little before 1300.

II. 21-4. Pope Martin IV, once treasurer of St. Martin's of Tours, is said to have been in the habit of stewing the eels in the famous sweet Vernaccia wine, and to have died of a surfeit. There is an ancient satirical epitaph averring that the eels rejoiced at his demise.

II. 28-33. This Boniface was an archbishop of Ravenna—not, of course, to be confused with the pope so often mentioned. In fact he was like Pope Adrian V (cf. Canto xix), a nephew of Pope Innocent IV, and of the great Genoese family, Fieschi, counts of Lavagna. Ubaldin de la Pila is said to have been a brother of the famous Ghibelline, Cardinal Ottaviano, mentioned among the heretics of *Inferno* x. Of Messer Marchese of Forlì there remains the anecdote of his thirsty habit which may have suggested the tercet.

I. 38. i.e., in his throat.

I. 43. Referring probably to a lady named Gentucca, who had shown some kindness to the Poet in his exile.

I. 51. A canzone of Dante's *New Life*, well translated by Rossetti.

II. 55 ff. Because we did not, like you, pen the dictates of the heart. Cf. the conversation with Oderisi, Canto xi, and also that with Guido Guinizelli, Canto xxvi. These conversations have the interest that the comments of a master upon his art and its contemporary practitioners cannot fail to possess. For Guittione and the Notary (Jacopo da Lentino) see Gaspari's *Early Italian Literature*. This pregnant reference to the source of our Poet's inspiration found an echo in the heart of Sidney:

'Fool, said thy Muse to me, look in thy heart and write.'

II. 82-7. Prophecy of the violent death of his brother, the famous Corso Donati, turbulent chief of the party of the Neri (Blacks), whose career is too much bound up in the history of the time to be summarized in a note.

ll. 103 ff. Cf. the symbolic tree described near the close of Canto xxii. The tree now encountered had been concealed by the curve of the terrace round the Mountain.

l. 121. The Centaurs (Ovid, *Met.* xii).

ll. 124 ff. Judges vii. 4-7.

l. 138. The Angel standing at the entrance to the last 'Pass of Pardon' glows with the colour symbolic of Love.

ll. 151-4. Here appears the second half of the beatitude which the Poet chooses to split, as we saw at the beginning of Canto xxii: 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' The Latin of the Vulgate, *esuriunt justitiam*, is interpreted by the last line: 'esuriendo sempre quanto e giusto,' 'hungering ever in accord with right', or as Norton renders it literally, 'so much as is right'. Inasmuch as the inordinate appetite purged on the Sixth Cornice comprises intemperance in drink as well as in food, this splitting of the beatitude may appear fanciful. Perhaps Dante uses the word 'hunger' with reference to the *dearth* suffered by those who undergo the purgation of this cornice.

## CANTO XXV

*The Mental Physiology of the Shades*

- 1 Now since the Sun had left the circle of noon  
to Taurus, and the Night to Scorpio,  
henceforward the ascent brooked hindrance none.
- 4 Wherefore, as people on their journey go  
and tarry not, whate'er beholding, while  
the spur of need is urgent on them; so
- 7 Now one by one we entered the defile,  
taking the stairway where the narrow lane  
compels the climbers to go single file.
- 10 And, like the little stork, for flying fain,  
lifting its wing, and, daring not to fly  
from off the nest, letting it droop again;
- 13 Such, with desire kindled and quenched, was I,  
and nothing further than the movement made  
that will to speak is indicated by.
- 16 'Do thou discharge,'—my gentle Father said,  
forbearing not, although we swiftly went,  
'the bow of speech bent to the arrowhead.'
- 19 Then opened I my mouth, made confident,  
beginning: 'How can there be withering  
of bodies with no need of nourishment?'
- 22 'Wouldst Meleager's plight to memory bring,  
how by a wasting brand he wasted was,  
this would not seem,' said he, 'so hard a thing;
- 25 And wouldst thou call to mind how in the glass  
tremble your forms whenever tremble ye,  
what seems hard would seem lightly brought to pass;
- 28 But that thy will be satisfied in thee,  
lo! here is Statius, whom I call and pray  
that of thy wounds he now the healer be.'
- 31 'If here where thou art present I display  
the eternal view,' responded Statius,  
'be my excuse I cannot say thee nay.'
- 34 Son, if thou well receive,'—began he thus,  
'and if thy mind consider this my word  
'twill make the 'How' thou askest, luminous.

- 37 Ne'er drunk up by the thirsty veins, but stored  
    the purest essence of the blood remains,  
    like viands that thou takest from the board;
- 40 And power informing in the heart obtains  
    to shape all human organs, being that flood  
    which, to become them, courses through the veins;
- 43 Digested still, descends where it is good  
    to leave unsaid; thereafter trickles thence  
    in natural vessel on another's blood,
- 46 Where both together have their confluence.  
    Passive is one,—but the other active, through  
    the perfect place whence pours its influence,
- 49 Begins to operate when joined thereto,  
    coagulating, quickening the whole  
    that it for shaping to consistence drew.
- 52 This active principle, become a soul  
    as of a plant (but so far different  
    that it half-way and that is at the goal),
- 55 Begins to move and to be sentient  
    like the sea fungus, then to organize  
    the powers whereof it is the rudiment,
- 58 Dilates, my son, and spreads the force that lies  
    within the heart of the begetter now,  
    where Nature would the organs all devise.
- 61 But how grow child from animal?—That 'How'  
    seest thou not yet; that is the problem great  
    which once misled a wiser man than thou,
- 64 Who by his teaching thought to separate  
    soul from potential intellect, for no  
    organ he saw thereto appropriate.
- 67 Open thy breast to coming truth, and know  
    that when the organizing of the brain  
    has been completed in the embryo,
- 70 Toward it turns the Primal Motor then,  
    by Nature's so great art made debonair,  
    breathing new spirit full of power to drain
- 73 Whatever virtue it finds active there  
    into its substance, and one soul there grows,  
    living, and feeling, and of itself aware.

- 76 To make less marvellous what I disclose,  
     consider how the sun's heat becomes wine,  
     joined to the juice that from the vine outflows.
- 79 This soul from out the flesh doth disentwine  
     whenever Lachesis hath thread no more,  
     and latent bears the human and divine:
- 82 So voiceless each and every other power,  
     but will and memory and intelligence  
     far keener in their working than before.
- 85 Incontinent the spirit falls propense  
     to one or the other shore in wondrous wise,  
     and first takes knowledge of its pathway thence.
- 88 Soon as the region round about it lies,  
     virtue informative beams round it there,  
     as in the living limbs in shape and size.
- 91 And as, when saturate with rain, the air  
     by the refraction of the solar rays  
     is decked with variegated colours fair,
- 94 Even so upon the circumjacent haze  
     a wraithlike form is printed by control  
     of shaping soul that in the region stays;
- 97 And as the flamelet's little aureole  
     follows the fire upon its shifting flight,  
     so its new form accompanies the soul.
- 100 Because thus rendered visible, the sprite  
     is called a shade; and organs of each sense  
     fashions thereafter, even to that of sight.
- 103 So thence proceed our words, our laughter thence,  
     thence do we fashion forth the tears and sighs  
     whereof the Mount may give thee evidence.
- 106 According as desires within us rise  
     or feeling, takes the shade configuration:  
     and this is what occasions thy surprise.'
- 109 Now were we come to the last punishment,  
     and now toward the right-hand were we starting,  
     and were upon another care intent.
- 112 There from the cliffside arrowy flames are darting,  
     and from the shelf breathes up a blast thereon,  
     hurling them back, a pathway thus disparting;

- 115 Whence it was needful to go one by one  
on the open side, so that I felt dismay  
of burning there, and here of falling down.
- 118 'To rein the eyes tight up, along this way,'  
my Leader said, 'must now be our concern,  
because for little one might go astray.'
- 121 Then from among those flames that hotly burn,  
came singing: 'God of clemency supreme!'  
which filled me with no less desire to turn;
- 124 Then saw I spirits walking through the flame:  
wherefore apportioning my sight I go,  
now looking to my steps, and now at them.
- 127 They cried aloud: 'A man I do not know!'  
As soon as they had to the end pursued  
that hymn; then recommenced, with voices low.
- 130 This done, anew they shouted: 'In the wood  
Diana stayed and banished Helicē,  
for Venus had deflowered her maidenhood.'
- 133 Then recommenced the song; then would it be  
the praise of wives and husbands who were pure,  
as virtue bids, and married chastity.
- 136 And in like mode, methinks, they must endure  
the while they burn within the fiery blast:  
with diet such as this, with such a cure,
- 139 The wound of sin must be healed up at last.

## NOTES

*Third day: mid-afternoon. Ascent to the Seventh Terrace, where the lust of the flesh is burnt away.*

ll. 1-3. The sun, in Aries (the Ram), leaves the meridian to the next following constellation, while the night, circling opposite, would be in the Scorpion. Cf. the opening of Canto ii.

l. 40. The heart is the 'perfect place' of line 48. As a man picks food from the table, so the heart takes the purest essence of the blood, infusing into it formative virtue, thus generating the seminal fluid.

l. 47. The blood of the male is said to be active, that of the female, passive.

l. 50. The word 'coagulating' is taken from the Latin of the *Vulgate*, Job x. 10, and Wisdom vii. 2, translated in the English versions by the words 'curdled', 'compacted'.

l. 53. The vegetative soul is the goal of the plant, but only an incident in the progress of the human embryo.

ll. 63-6. Averroës, che 'l gran comento feo (*Inferno* iv. 144), following Aristotle, finding no special organ for the intellectual powers, fell back upon a doctrine something like that of Emerson's 'Oversoul', thus abrogating mere individual immortality and with it the whole system of rewards and punishments after death. Possibly Aquinas and Dante misunderstood Averroës, as they did his name (Ibn Roschd). See Renan's well-known essay, *Averroës et l'Averroïsme*.

ll. 68 ff. The Prime Mover (God) breathes a soul into the embryo.

l. 82. The faculties of sense mute.

l. 86. The two shores are that of Tiber-mouth, leading to the isle of Purgatory, and that of the dark river of *Inferno* iii.

l. 108. The ninety lines from 19 to 108 form perhaps the supreme example in literature of the succinct handling in verse of an abstruse philosophical theme. Dante's doubt as to how bodies that have no need of food can pine for want of it opens up the larger question of the relation of soul and body, upon which hangs in turn the whole system of theology. The question being too difficult for Virgil (human reason) is referred to Statius who, being a redeemed spirit, may be supposed to have received 'the new knowledge'. Here, concentrated in a very palatable bolus, the student of the workings of the human mind is offered a taste of that 'bread of

angels' which Dante had more amply spread upon his board in the *Convivio* or *Banquet*. It has been said that in the Middle Age men had no philosophy, but only logic and theology. However this may be, it would savour of intellectual arrogance to despise or overlook an era which could produce a Dante. As to the inter-relation of matter and spirit, the dependence of intellect upon physical function, the possible survival of intelligence, who shall say that, after all advances in science, we have yet reached a much better working hypothesis than the doubtless very crude one offered in this Canto? Rehandling the same theme six centuries later in the light of all our gathered knowledge, Bridges reports little definite advance:

‘This picklock Reason is still a-fumbling at the wards,  
Bragging to unlock the door of stern Reality.’

*Testament of Beauty*, i. 463.

ll. 109 ff. While Statius was discoursing they were moving on, and are now come to the Seventh Terrace to which Virgil had promised to lead Dante (*Inferno* i. 118-20).

l. 122. First words of a hymn containing a prayer for purity.

l. 127. Words of Mary to the Angel, Luke i. 34.

ll. 130-2. Ovid. *Met.* ii, 401-530. Cf. *Paradiso* xxxi. 32-3.

## CANTO XXVI

*Dante meets Two Modern Predecessors*

- 1 While thus along the border we proceeded  
in single file, my Master kept repeating:  
‘Take care, take care! the warning here is needed.’
- 4 The sun was now on my right shoulder beating,  
and over all the west a splendour shed  
that blanched the blue; whereon my shadow meeting
- 7 The pallid flame made it appear more red;  
then saw I many shades such indication  
take notice of, as through the fire they sped.
- 10 This was the cause that gave initiation  
to speech of me; and they began to say:  
‘His body does not seem an adumbration!’
- 13 Then certain of them, far as in them lay,  
came nearer me, always with vigilance  
never to issue from the fiery way.
- 16 ‘O laggard not, but reverent perchance,  
who followest the others round this slope,  
answer my burning, thirsting suppliace!
- 19 Nor wilt thou answer only to my hope;  
since greater thirst for it endure these all  
than for cool drink Hindoo or Ethiop.
- 22 Tell us, how dost thou make thyself a wall  
against the sun, as wert thou still without  
that passage where the snares of Death besall?’
- 25 So hailed me one of them; and I, no doubt,  
had made me known, but that I was intent  
upon a novel thing that came about:
- 28 For, midway through the burning element,  
facing this company, a people hied  
who made me stop to gaze for wonderment,
- 31 I saw there hasten up from either side  
each shade to kiss a shade, for dalliance  
unresting, with brief greeting satisfied.
- 34 So pausing, as their dusky troops advance,  
emmet encounters emmet, nose to nose,  
their road and fortune to espy, perchance.

- 37 No sooner does the friendly greeting close,  
or ever the first footstep passes by,  
strive these to lift up louder cries than those:
- 40 'Sodom and Gomorrah!' the newcomers cry;  
the rest: 'Pasiphaë enters the cow,  
so that the bullock to her lust may hie.'
- 43 As cranes to the Riphæan mountain brow  
might fly in part, part to the sandy plain,  
these shunning frost and those the sun, so now
- 46 One people goes and one comes on amain,  
and weeping they return to their first chants  
and to their more appropriate refrain;
- 49 And close about me as before advance  
the very same who had entreated me,  
with will to listen in their countenance.
- 52 I, who now twice had seen their urgency,  
began to speak: 'O spirit brotherhood  
secure of peace, whenever it may be,
- 55 These limbs of mine, neither mature nor crude,  
left I down yonder on the earth behind,  
but bring them here with all their joints and blood.
- 58 I go hence up to be no longer blind:  
a Lady is on high who wins us grace  
whence through your world I bring my mortal rind.
- 61 But so may be your fond desire apace  
fulfilled, so harbour you the heavenly height  
most ample, which is Love's full dwelling place,
- 64 Tell me, that yet on paper I may write,  
who may ye be and what that multitude  
behind your backs, and going opposite?'
- 67 As stands agaze the mountaineer in mood  
bewildered, stricken silent and dismayed,  
when come to town in rustic garb and rude,
- 70 So did now in its semblance every shade;  
but when they had their wonder well in hand,  
which soon in lofty hearts is quieted,
- 73 Resumed that one who made the first demand:  
'Blessed art thou who, for life's better ending,  
layest up experience of our border-land!'

- 76 The folk who come not with us were offending  
     in that for which once Caesar suffered blame,  
         hearing "Regina" with his triumph blending.
- 79 Whence in their parting from us, they exclaim  
     "Sodom!" as thou hast heard, in self-despite,  
         and make the burning hotter with their shame.
- 82 Our own transgression was hermaphrodite;  
     but since we heeded not the human code,  
         following like the brutes our appetite,
- 85 Departing, we, in self-reproachful mode,  
     ourselves pronounce the name of her who so  
         did bestialize herself in beastlike wood.
- 88 Our deeds now, how far guilty, knowest thou:  
     wouldst thou, perchance, by name know who we be,  
         there is no time to tell, nor should I know.
- 91 I grant, indeed, thy wish concerning me:  
     I'm Guido Guinizelli, purged by fire  
         through penitence before th' extremity.'
- 94 Such as, amid Lycurgus' frenzied ire,  
     two sons became their mother to regret,  
         such became I, but do not so aspire,
- 97 When I heard name himself that father, meet  
     for me and other men my betters, who  
         ever used gracious rhymes of love and sweet;
- 100 And, hearing not, did I my way pursue  
     long while with pensive gaze and nothing said,  
         but for the fire no nearer there I drew.
- 103 Thereafter, when of gazing fully fed,  
     I offered myself all to do him grace  
         with such an oath as makes one credited.
- 106 And he to me: 'Thy words have left a trace  
     upon my spirit charactered so clear  
         that Lethë cannot dim it nor efface.
- 109 But if it be a true avouch I hear,  
     what is the cause of thy avowal, pray,  
         by word and look that thou dost hold me dear?'
- 112 And I to him: 'Your every dulcet lay,  
     which, if our modern use endure so long,  
         will render dear their very ink for aye.'

- 15 'He yonder, brother,' back to me he flung  
with finger pointing to a spirit before,  
'was a better shaper of his mother tongue.'
- 18 In love-rhymes and romantic tales of yore  
surpassed he all, and let fools prate who view  
him of Limoges as the superior.
- 21 They hold by rumour more than by the true,  
and in that way their fixed opinion mould,  
ere art or reason have been listened to.
- 124 Thus with Guittone many did of old,  
basing his praise upon *they say, they say,*  
until at length with most the truth controlled.
- 127 Now if thou have such charter that the way  
into that cloister is vouchsafed to thee  
where Christ is abbot of the college, pray
- 130 A Paternoster unto him for me,  
as far as profits here the orison  
where power to sin no more for us may be.'
- 133 Then peradventure to give place to one  
who followed close, he vanished in the burning  
as fish through water to the bottom run.
- 136 I went a little on, to that one turning  
who had been shown me, saying, if I knew  
his name it would be solace to my yearning.
- 139 And he of free accord replied thereto:  
*Your courteous request delights me so  
I can not, will not hide away from you.*
- 142 I am Arnaut who weep and singing go;  
*contritely I see past folly, and I see  
rejoicingly the hoped-for morning glow.*
- 145 I pray you now by that Divinity  
*who guides you to the summit of the stair,  
keep at due time my pain in memory.*
- 148 Then hid he in the fire that makes them fair.

## NOTES

*Terrace of the Sensual. Sinners according to Nature and Sinners against Nature. Third day: late afternoon.*

I. 7. The three poets are stepping along the ledge with the purging fires on the left and on the right the border from which a false step might precipitate Dante. As they are facing southward, the sloping sun projects over the white flame Dante's shadow, reddening the surface as he moves along.

I. 12. Not the mere eidolon described in Canto xxv.

II. 28 ff. Dante who exhibits his taste for symmetry in a thousand details, perhaps intends a parallel between the two troops of the lustful, who meet and pass like files of ants, and the two opposing files of the panders and the seducers in the first circle of *Malebolge*. *Inferno* xviii, from line 26.

I. 41. The 'falsa vacca' of *Inferno* xii. 13.

II. 43-5. Everything here is imaginary except the sandy plain. The Riphæan mountains were supposed to be far north; the sandy plain is the Libyan desert; the two flocks would hardly be flying in opposite directions at the same season.

I. 69. The Italian is intranslatably felicitous: *quando rozzo e salratico s'inurba*. *S'inurba*, 'comes to town for the first time' (inurbs him). In general the reflexives in the Latin tongues have a compactness defying English equivalents.

I. 78. Taunted by his ribald soldiery.

I. 82. i.e., immoderate but not unnatural self-indulgence. The nymph Salmacis prayed to be fused with the youth Hermaphroditus, and had her wish granted.

I. 92. Cf. xi. 97-9.

II. 94-6. In meeting Jason, *Inferno* xviii, we learned the first thrilling vicissitudes of Hypsipylē's romantic career. By Jason she had twins from whom, before they had grown up, she was carried off by pirates and sold as a slave to King Lycurgus. Entrusted with the care of his little boy, she was one day in the fields, when the 'Seven against Thebes' came marching by, very much athirst. Leaving the child on the grass, she led them at their urgent entreaty to the fountain Langeia (Canto xxii, l. 112), but returning found only the dead body of the child who had been stung by a serpent. Crazed by this bereavement, Lycurgus was about to put her to death, when her two heroic sons rushed in at the last moment and took her

to their protecting embrace. Our Poet is like them in his delight to find his father in Apollo safe from perdition, but for fear of the fire does not quite rise to the heroism of the embrace. Dante owes the story of Hypsipylē to Statius who, it will be remembered, is a silent witness to all this.

ll. 112 ff. Guido Guinizelli, in Italian, and Arnaut Daniel, in Provençal, seem to be considered by our poet as the recent predecessors to whom his indebtedness is deepest. The first awakening of poetry after the Dark Ages was in Provence in the twelfth century. The literary judgements and references in this Canto and in xxiv are of so great interest that they cannot be treated with satisfaction to any one in brief notes. Those who know nothing of the subject may begin by looking at the translations of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his *Early Italian Poets*.

l. 120. Giraut de Borneil.

l. 131. Cf. Canto xi, ll. 19-24. Spirits in Purgatory are not subject to temptation.

l. 139 to end. The eight lines here attributed to Arnaut Daniel are in the Provençal tongue and are without doubt of Dante's composition.

## CANTO XXVII

*The Will of the Pilgrim of Eternity is Purified*

- 1 As when the earliest rays of dawning quiver  
where shed His blood the Maker of the light,  
high Libra lamping over Ebro-river,
- 4 And Ganges-wave at noontide burning bright,  
so hung the sun; and day being nearly o'er,  
appeared to us God's Angel benedight.
- 7 Standing without the flame upon the shore,  
he sang: *Blest they who pure in heart abide!*  
in voice melodious, than ours far more.
- 10 Then: 'No one farther goes, souls sanctified,  
unbitten by the fire; be thither sped,  
not deaf to chanting from the farther side.'
- 13 As we drew nearer to him, this he said:  
whence I became, to hear a thing so dire,  
like one within the fosse deposited.
- 16 Clasping my hands and gazing at the fire  
I forward bent, recalling vividly  
bodies of men once seen upon the pyre.
- 19 My kindly Leaders now turned round to me,  
and Virgil spoke as follows: 'Son of mine,  
here may be torment, not mortality.'
- 22 Recall, recall! when layest thou supine  
on Geryon's shoulders, still I safely led;  
and how then now, more near to the Divine?
- 25 What though a thousand years within the bed  
of this same fire thou didst abide, believe  
it could not hurt a hair upon thy head.
- 28 And if perchance thou deem that I deceive,  
draw nigh it, and with proper hands assay  
upon the border of thy garments. Give
- 31 Fear to the wind,—put every doubt away;  
turn hither and come forward, safe withal.'  
Yet against conscience did I rooted stay.
- 34 Seeing me rooted, stubborn to his call,  
he said, perturbed a little: 'Look now, son,  
'twixt Beatrice and thee remains this wall.'

- 37 As the eyes of Pyramus, when death drew on,  
opened at Thisbe's name, upon her dwelling  
while the mulberry became vermillion,
- 40 So did I turn, my stubborn fear dispelling,  
to my wise Leader, by the name beguiled  
that in my memory is ever welling.
- 43 Whereon he shook his head at me, and smiled:  
'What, would we tarry here?'—as when we win  
with proffered apple an unwilling child.
- 46 Then in advance of me he entered in  
the fire, entreating Statius to come last,  
who for a long way back had been between.
- 49 When I was in, I would have gladly cast  
myself in molten glass for solacement,  
so beyond measure was the burning blast.
- 52 To comfort me, my kindly Father went  
ever discoursing but of Beatrice,  
saying: 'Her eyes seem now upon us bent.'
- 55 Beyond, a voice was singing, and by this  
conducted, and to this attentive quite,  
we issued forth where mounts the precipice.
- 58 *Come, all ye of my Father benedight!*  
rang out within a light there manifest  
so that I could not look, it was so bright.
- 61 'Night comes,' it added, 'and goes the sun to rest;  
then quicken up your pace and do not stay,  
while yet not wholly darkened is the west.'
- 64 Straight upward through the rock mounted the way,  
directed so that I, before me there,  
cut off the sinking sun's last level ray.
- 67 And both I and my Sages grew aware  
of sunset, by my shadow vanished thence,  
when we had made brief trial of the stair.
- 70 And ere within one dim circumference  
the wide horizon mingled sea and shore,  
and Night held sway with all her influence,
- 73 Each of us on a stair was bedded; for  
the mountain-law deprived us of the will  
and of the power of there ascending more.

- 76 Just as, while ruminating, goats grow still,  
however bold and nimble they had run  
over the heights before they browsed their fill,
- 79 Hushed in the shade while blazes hot the sun,  
watched by the herdsman leaning on his rod,  
who, leaning thus, attends them every one;
- 82 And as the shepherd, stretched upon the sod,  
watches by night his quiet flock beside,  
that no wild beast may scatter it abroad:
- 85 Even so did we at such an hour abide,  
I like the goat, they shepherdlike, all three  
hemmed in by lofty rock on either side.
- 88 Little without could there be seen by me;  
but in that little saw I more intense  
the stars, and larger than their wont to be.
- 91 So musing and so gazing, somnolence  
fell on me, such as oftentimes before  
they come about, gives tidings of events.
- 94 That hour, I think, when through the eastern door  
first on the mountain Cytherea beams,—  
who fired with love seems burning evermore,—
- 97 A Lady young and fair I saw, in dreams,  
who through a meadow land appeared to go  
gathering flowers, and singing said, meseems:
- 100 'If any ask my name, then let him know  
that I am Leah, and I move alway  
fair hands to wreath myself a garland so.
- 103 Here at my glass I joy in my array;  
but never does my sister Rachel rise  
up from her mirror where she sits all day.
- 106 She yearns to look in her own lovely eyes,  
as I to deck me with my hands am yearning:  
her, seeing, and me, doing satisfies.'
- 109 Through splendours of the dawn already burning  
(that rise to pilgrim hearts so much more sweet  
as less remote their hostel, home returning),
- 112 The shades of night were now departing fleet;  
and slumber having with them fled away,  
I rose, seeing my great Masters on their feet.

- 115 'That sweet fruit which, through many a branching  
ye mortals go seeking with little ease, [spray,  
shall set at peace thy hungerings to-day.'
- 118 Virgil began to me in words like these,  
and never were there guerdons that could cope  
with suchlike rapture-giving largesses.
- 121 Such longing upon longing for the slope  
came over me, at every step I could  
perceive my wings becoming fledged with hope.
- 124 When all the stairs were traversed, and we stood  
upon the uppermost, did Virgil turn  
his eyes on me with wistful fatherhood;
- 127 'Son, thou hast looked upon the fire eterne  
and temporal, and comest to a place  
where, of myself, no further I discern.
- 130 I brought thee here by intellect and grace;  
henceforth let thy good pleasure guide thy going:  
thou art beyond the steep, the narrow ways.
- 133 Look how the sun is on thy forehead glowing,  
look at the grass, the tender shrubs, the bloom  
that here the soil is willingly bestowing.
- 136 Until the lovely eyes rejoicing come,  
which weeping made me come to lead thee thence,  
here canst thou sit and canst among them roam.
- 139 Await no more my word or influence:  
upright is now thy will, and sound, and free,  
and wrong to disobey its bidding: whence
- 142 Lord of Thyself I crown and mitre thee!'

## NOTES

*Third and last night on the Mountain, with the symbolic dream of Rachel and Leah. Virgil's last words.*

ll. 1-5. All the heavens, whether visible or not, circle round in the vast spaces of the Poet's imagination. It is important, however, not to forget that true imagination, such as Dante's pre-eminently is, must be founded on knowledge. Now according to the knowledge accessible to the man of that time, Ganges and Ebro mark the eastern and western bounds of the hemisphere of land, Jerusalem being its centre and the Mountain of Purgatory at the antipodes; whence it follows that at sunset on the Mountain it will be sunrise at Jerusalem and noon over Ganges, while Ebro will reflect the midnight stars of Libra (the constellation opposite to Aries in which now rides the sun). The river Ebro stands for Spain, of which it is a principal stream; instead of it the Poet alternatively puts now Seville, now the Pillars of Hercules, now Ceuta near the Straits, now Morocco. For a similar astronomical determination of the hour, with like references to Jerusalem and Ganges, cf. beginning of Canto ii.

ll. 22-3. Cf. *Inferno* xvii. 79-99.

ll. 37-9. According to the pretty legend of the immortal lovers of Babylon (Ovid, *Metam.* iv. 55-166), the mulberry is empurpled with the blood of Pyramus. Benvenuto da Imola finds in their love a parallel to that of Dante and Beatrice. Cf. Canto xxxiii, l. 69.

ll. 58-63. *Matthew* xxv. 34. The speaker is the seventh and last angelic sentinel who, presumably, erases the last P from Dante's brow.

ll. 64-9. They turned toward the right to pass through the flame, so that now they are going east and the setting sun is casting the long shadow of the living body upon the stairway before them.

ll. 76-87. The double comparison is developed into a little poem in the manner familiar to readers of Milton and the classical epics. The Poet here 'sows with the whole hand' (Lowell's phrase). This is the artist's device for beautifully marking the crucial importance of this last night upon the mountainside, just prior to the final solemn pronouncement of Virgil at the entrance to the Earthly Paradise.

ll. 97 ff. Dante's third dream of presage: Leah and Rachel—the Active Life and the Contemplative.

ll. 127-42. These are the last words spoken by Virgil in the Poem, although he remains with Statius for a while by the side of Dante, who records their smiling applause of Matilda's graceful 'corollary' at the close of the next Canto. During the mystic procession of the Church Triumphant, Dante notes Virgil's astonishment; apparently Statius has gone on. After this Virgil quietly vanishes unnoticed. See Canto xxx, ll. 43-57. With these noble words of his Guide, type of Human Reason, our Poet is initiated into that Universal Communion in which participate the wise and good of every era and every tongue, whose simple creed is 'the religion of all sensible men.' This is that Round Table where knights in the eternal crusade for the liberation of humanity all gather round the same Holy Grail. Dante has not yet, indeed, satisfied all the requirements of his particular faith; Theology, in the person of Beatrice, is about to wound him with a sword whetted by his own sensitive conscience; he has, however, attained the lofty dignity of King and Priest over himself.

'There is no danger to a man that knows  
What life and death is; there 's not any law  
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful  
That he should stoop to any other law.'

## CANTO XXVIII

*The Earthly Paradise crowning the Mountain*

- 1 Now eager for exploring the divine  
evergreen forest dense, that screened the day,  
so newly-risen, for these eyes of mine,
- 4 I leave the Mountain-brow without more stay,  
and slowly, slowly through the plain advance,  
that everywhere breathes fragrance of the May.
- 7 A soft air, subject to no variance,  
continually stroked me on the brow  
as lightly as when gentle zephyr fans;
- 10 And tremblingly responsive, every bough  
was bending all its foliage what way  
the Holy Mount cast the first shadow now;
- 13 Yet did they not so violently sway  
that any little bird on topmost limb  
was fain forsake the practice of his lay,
- 16 But might, while chanting the full joy in him,  
welcome the breath of morn the leaves among,  
that ever bore a burden to his hymn:
- 19 From bough to bough goes gathering such song  
through the pine forest on Chiassi's shore,  
when forth by Aeolus Scirocco is flung.
- 22 So far already through the woodland hoar  
my lingering feet had borne me, that I knew  
where I had entered into it, no more;
- 25 When lo! a brooklet cut my pathway through,  
rippling along toward my left, and bending  
the grasses that along the margin grew.
- 28 All waters here in purity transcending,  
would seem commingled in comparison  
with that, whose limpid wave conceals no blending,
- 31 Although it darkly, very darkly run  
beneath perpetual shade, unpenetrated  
ever by radiance of moon or sun.
- 34 My footsteps tarried, but mine eyes elated  
passed to alight beyond the rivulet  
on the fresh May profusely variegated;

- 37 And there appeared (as when a thing is met  
all of a sudden, leading thought to stray  
for the great wonder, and all else forget)
- 40 A Lady, who went her solitary way  
singing and culling flower from flower, whereof  
the colouring made all her pathway gay.
- 43 I said: 'Pray, Lady fair, in rays of love  
basking, if I may credit looks that still  
are wont the pledges of the heart to prove,
- 46 Draw forward hither, if it be thy will,  
toward the margin of this brooklet borne,  
that I may understand thy canticle.
- 49 Thou bringest back Proserpina, the morn,  
the dewy meadow where she forfeited  
the spring, and left her mother all forlorn.'
- 52 As turns upon the floor with even tread  
a lady in the dance who hardly sets  
foot before foot, even so above the bed
- 55 Of scarlet and of yellow flowerets,  
she turned to me with maidlike innocence  
and drooping eyes, and to the rivulet's
- 58 Border approaching, did so recompense  
my praying, that the dulcet melody  
was borne to me, together with the sense.
- 61 When she was where the grass begins to be  
bathed by the ripples of the beauteous river,  
she raised the guerdon of her eyes on me.
- 64 I think there glowed so bright a lustre never  
beneath the lids of Venus, by her son  
empierced with dart from his unwilling quiver.
- 67 She smiled, erect upon the margin yon,  
with fair hands trailing many a colour pied  
of flowers upon that highland never sown.
- 70 We were parted by a stream three paces wide;  
but Hellespont where Xerxes passed,—a spot  
to this day curbing every human pride,—
- 73 Never more hated in Leander wrought,  
because 'twixt Sestos and Abydos swelling,  
than this in me since then it opened not.

*The Earthly Paradise*

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- 76 'Ye are newcomers,' she began her telling,  
    'and so my smiling in this place elect  
        for human nature as a native dwelling,  
79 Perchance awakens in you some suspect;  
        but the Psalm *Delectasti* sheds a ray  
            of light that may discloud your intellect.  
82 And thou in front, who didst entreat me, say,  
        wouldst thou hear more?—By thy solicitude  
            prompted, I came to do it quite away.'  
85 'The water,' said I, 'and the murmuring wood  
        impugn within me new belief, thereto  
            in contradiction, as I understood.'  
88 Whence she: 'How from their proper cause ensue  
        the things occasioning thy wonderment,  
            will I declare and purge thy inward view.  
91 The Good Supreme, sole in itself content,  
        created man for good, and peace eterne  
            pledged him by giving him this tenement.  
94 Here, by his fault, short while did he sojourn;  
        by his own fault, to travail and to woe  
            did innocent joy and pleasant pastime turn.  
97 That the disturbances produced below  
        by exhalations of the land and sea  
            (that after heat, as far as may be, go)  
100 Might wage no war upon humanity,  
        rose heavenward up so high this Mountain here,  
            and is above the guarded gateway free.  
103 Now since, in circuit with the primal sphere,  
        the universal air is rolling round,  
            while it remains unbroken anywhere,  
106 This motion strikes the summit, disbound  
        in living ether all, and makes the dense  
            forest, being a thicket, to resound.  
109 Within the smitten plant has residence  
        power to impregn the breeze, and this henceforth,  
            in whirling, sheds abroad that influence.  
112 Conceived and childed so on yonder earth  
        are various trees of virtue various,  
            according as its clime and soil have worth.

- 115 Rightly considering the matter thus,  
that without visible seed some plants take root  
in yonder earth, should not seem marvellous.
- 118 And thou must know that where thou setst thy foot  
the holy upland every seed contains,  
and never yonder can ye pluck such fruit.
- 121 The water that thou seest wells not from veins  
which vapours, by the cold condensed, restore,  
like river that now loses breath, now gains,
- 124 But from a fountain constant evermore;  
and Will Divine replenishes that source  
by all that forth its double rivers pour.
- 127 On this side, it flows downward with the force  
that takes man's memory of sin away;  
the other, that of all good done, restores.
- 130 It is called Lethē here, as Eunoë  
on the other side, nor doth the working speed  
till of the taste of both ye make assay.
- 133 This every other savour doth exceed.  
Now, though thy thirst may be so satisfied  
that of more telling there be little need,
- 136 A corollary will I grant beside,  
nor deem I the less dear to thee my granting,  
if it beyond the pact be amplified.
- 139 Who anciently the golden age were chanting,  
and its felicity, about this place  
dreamed peradventure, while Parnassus haunting.
- 142 Here without guile took root the human race;  
here is all fruitage, here the prime unbroken;  
this is the nectar they unite to praise.'
- 145 Then looking to my Poets for a token,  
I noted how with smiling mien they brooked  
the parable that lastly had been spoken;
- 148 Then to the Lady fair again I looked.

## NOTES

*Soon after sunrise on the fourth day. Dante, no longer guided but followed by the two great Masters, is walking on the level upland.*

ll. 19-21. The Roman name of the port of Ravenna was Classis, modified in Dante's age to Chiassi, now Classe. The ancient Pineta, although sadly depleted, still borders the sea between Ravenna and Cervia. And when Aeolus looses the rain-bringing south-east wind over the troubled Adriatic, every pine-tree of the wide forest becomes a charded harp intoning the same solemn music that the lonely Poet heard.

l. 28. 'Here', i.e., in this mortal world.  
ll. 40 ff. This is the Lady of whom Leah, in the dream of Canto xxvii, is the presage, just as Rachel is the presage of Beatrice. No name is given to this Lady until the very end of the Cantica (xxxiii. 119) where she is called Matilda. The early commentators, including Dante's son Peter, assume that the great Countess of Tuscany is meant. Modern writers challenge for weighty reasons this traditional view. Readers should be content to accept the Lady purely and simply as the 'ever-womanly' figure limned by the artist's pencil.

l. 80. Psalm xcii. 4 (Vulgate, xci. 5), 'Delectasti me, Domine in factura tua' (Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work).

l. 82. Every word in the Poem is significant—this especially so. Virgil no longer leads, but follows in silence.

l. 85 to end. This is one of the many Cantos wherein Dante tries to rib his poetry with positive science—unscientific as much of it proves to be. In Canto xxi, ll. 40-57, Statius had explained to Dante that above the Gateway of Purgatorio proper—the uppermost of the three mystic steps whereon the Vicar of Peter has his feet—there is no earthquake, nor rain nor hail nor mist, in short, no climatic alteration or meteorological change, such as the lower parts of the Mountain, being purely natural, are subject to. Here, however, Dante sees a running stream, feels a breeze upon his brow, hears a soughing in the forest whose leaves and sprays are all bent toward the west under the steady stress of the eastern trade-wind. All this appears to contradict what Statius had told him, so that he is full of doubt and wonder. Accordingly when the beautiful Lady invites him to ask questions, he begs her to explain this

contradiction. The substance of her explanation is as follows: 'My smiling is explained by the ninety-second Psalm, "For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work".' As to the wind (ll. 97-9), 'this passage,' says Moore, 'describes the exemption of the Earthly Paradise from the storms generated on the lower earth by the exhalations which, proceeding from the water and the earth, rise as far as they can, following the heat by which such exhalations are drawn up.' Here, as everywhere, Dante follows the science of his time, which itself followed Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. But the wind here on the upper mountain is due to a very different cause: the revolution of the Primum Mobile, *la prima volta*, or first moving sphere. It is this that, carrying with it the upper air from east to west around the stationary earth, causes the steady current or trade-wind which bends the leaves all one way and makes the forest murmur like that on Classe's shore (*la Pineta di Ravenna*). As to the water: in many places Dante deals with the action of the moisture in the air, for ever replenishing the rivers at their sources in the mountains. But here the two streams, Lethe and Eunoë, issue at two sides from a fountain, steady and sure, that is constantly fed by direct interposition of the Will of God. Thus Dante's doubts are solved, but the Lady volunteers a 'corollary', connecting the Earthly Paradise with the Age of Gold of the Poets, two of whom are present and are pleased.

*l. 123.* The Poet must some time have dwelt by a torrent near its source in the mountain snow, which, melting in the sun and freezing at night, keeps the breast of the stream summer-long swelling and subsiding.

## CANTO XXIX

*Mystic Procession of the Church Triumphant*

- 1 The Lady, in the manner of a lover,  
  resumed her singing, when her words were done:  
    *Blessed are they whose sins are covered over.*
- 4 And as the nymphs were wont to go alone  
  among the woodland shadows, with endeavour  
    some to behold, some to avoid the sun,
- 7 She moved then up along the little river,  
  following the bank, and I with her abreast,  
    brief paces with brief paces matching ever.
- 10 Between us not a hundred steps were paced,  
  when both alike the margins made a bend,  
    so that toward the east again I faced.
- 13 Nor yet, so going, had we far to wend  
  before the Lady fully turned about  
    toward me, saying: 'Look, brother, and attend.'
- 16 And lo! a sudden lustre ran throughout  
  every quarter of the forest vast,  
    so that of lightning I was put in doubt.
- 19 But since the lightning, as it comes, is past,  
  and this still brightened more and more the wood,  
    'What thing is this?'—within my thought I cast.
- 22 Then did a melody delightful flood  
  the illumined air, whence holy ardour made  
    me fain to reprobate Eve's hardihood;
- 25 For there, where both the Earth and Heaven obeyed,  
  the woman only, and but just created,  
    would underneath not any veil be stayed;
- 28 Whereunder, had she but devoutly waited,  
  so should I that ineffable content  
    have sooner had, and had it unabated.
- 31 While I amid so many first-fruits went,  
  of the eternal joy, and all upstrung,  
    and evermore on greater joyance bent,
- 34 In front of us, the verdant boughs among,  
  the air as if by fire enkindled grew,  
    and the sweet sound was now perceived as song.

- 37 O holy Virgins! now did I for you  
     hunger or cold or vigils never shun,  
     need goads me to implore the guerdon due.
- 40 Pour forth for me thy waters, Helicon,  
     Urania sustain me with thy chorus,  
     to put in rhyme things hard to think upon!
- 43 The wide tract of the middle distance bore us  
     the show of seven trees of gold, not far  
     beyond, in false presentment there before us;
- 46 But when so near approached to them we are,  
     that common traits which lead the senses wrong  
     forfeit by distance no particular,
- 49 The force that makes discourse of reason strong  
     perceived at length that candlesticks were they,  
     and heard *Hosannah* in voices of the song.
- 52 Aloft was flaming now the fair array,  
     far brighter than the Moon who lamps the skies  
     at midnight in her monthly course midway.
- 55 Thereon I turned about with wild surmise  
     to the good Virgil, who thereto replied  
     with like amazement in his startled eyes.
- 58 Thence turning back my vision, I descried  
     those high things moving on to us so slow  
     they would have been outstripped by the new bride.
- 61 The Lady chided me: 'Why yearning so  
     only to gaze upon each living light,  
     that what comes after them thou dost forgo?'
- 64 Then, as behind their leaders, came to sight  
     a people in white raiment,—never seen  
     was here upon the earth so pure a white.
- 67 The water on my left was full of sheen,  
     reflecting back the left-hand side of me  
     as in a mirror, when I looked therein.
- 70 When I had gained such place upon the lea  
     that separated me the brook alone,  
     I stayed my steps, the better thus to see,
- 73 And saw the flamelets forward move, a zone  
     of coloured air behind them leaving, so  
     that they appeared by brush of painter drawn;

- 76 And thus the air above remained aglow  
with seven stripes, containing every hue  
of Delia's girdle and Apollo's bow.
- 79 These pennons farther than my range of view  
were streaming rearward; by my estimate  
ten steps asunder were the outer two.
- 82 Under so fair a sky as I relate,  
by two and two came Elders twenty-four,  
their brows with flower-de-luce incoronate.
- 85 They all were singing: 'Blessed thou before  
the daughters all of Adam; blessed be  
thy loveliness for ever and evermore.'
- 88 Now when no more the chosen company  
footed the flowers and tender herbage seen  
upon the margin opposite to me,
- 91 As follows light on light in the serene  
heaven, came after them four living things,  
each one incoronate with frondage green.
- 94 Every one was feathered with six wings  
studded with eyes; the eyes of Argus thus,  
if living, might be full of visionings.
- 97 I lavish no more verses to discuss  
their form, O Reader! other charges bind  
so, that perforce I am penurious.
- 100 But read Ezekiel, and call to mind  
how he beheld them from the quarter cold  
with cloud approaching, and with fire and wind;
- 103 As thou shalt find it in his pages told,  
such were they,—save as to their pinions, John  
varies from him, and with the saint I hold.
- 106 Within the space among those four came on,  
triumphal, rolling on two wheels, a Wain  
that forward by a Gryphon's neck was drawn.
- 109 Up he extended both his wings between  
the middle striping and the three and three,  
that none took hurt from being cleft amain.
- 112 How high they rose no human eye could see;  
where he is bird his limbs of gold are wrought,  
the others white, but mingled ruddily.

- 115 With car so beautiful Rome honoured not  
or Scipio or even Augustus,—nay,  
poor were the Sun's to such a chariot,
- 118 The chariot of the Sun which, driven astray,  
was burnt at Earth's devoted orison,  
when Jove was just in his mysterious way.
- 121 At the right wheel, in dance came whirling on  
three ladies: one of such a ruddy glow  
as haply in the fire were seen of none;
- 124 Such flesh and frame the second one did show  
as out of emerald she had been made;  
the third appeared like freshly fallen snow.
- 127 Now by the white appeared they to be led,  
now by the ruddy lady, by whose lay  
the others timed their swift or tardy tread.
- 130 Beside the left wheel four made holiday  
in purple raiment, following as guide  
one in whose head three eyes looked every way
- 133 Behind all those described thus, I despaired  
two aged men clad with a difference,  
but like in bearing grave and dignified.
- 136 One seemed adept in the experiments  
of high Hippocrates, whom Nature made  
for th' animals she holds in preference;
- 139 The other, who was carrying a blade  
gleaming and sharp, showed care so opposite  
that, though this side the stream, I was afraid.
- 142 Thereafter saw I four of humble plight;  
and behind all an aged man alone  
walking in trance, but yet acute of sight.
- 145 These seven, like the company first shown,  
were habited in white; yet not like those  
around the forehead wore a lily crown,
- 148 But rather flowers of crimson, and the rose:  
onlooker would have sworn, if near them not,  
that they were all afame above their brows.
- 151 When over against me was the Chariot,  
thunder was heard; whereby that worthy band  
was interdicted further march, methought,
- 154 There with the vanward ensigns brought to stand.

## NOTES

*Mystic Pageant along the Bank of Lethe.*

I. 3. Vulgate Psalm xxxi. 1, 'quorum tecta sunt peccata.  
In the version of 1611: 'whose sin is covered' (Psalm xxxii. 1)

II. 7-12. Dante had been walking eastward till coming to the left bank of the brook. He now turns to the right, walking up-stream, in front of Virgil and Statius and keeping step with the Lady on the right bank, until the stream sweeps round a sharp curve and they all turn toward the east again. As usual in this *Cantic*, as well as in the *Inferno*, the movements are so definite that they could be (and have been) charted.

II. 37-42. This noble invocation is amply justified and supported by the splendid if somewhat stiffly brocaded eloquence of the whole Canto. Emblematic pageantry was a cunning and, of course, wholly legitimate device of the Church to fasten its hold upon the illiterate multitude, while among the cultivated few who enjoyed both learning (such as it then was) and leisure, allegorical symbolism was more than a fashion—a veritable passion. Nowhere else in medieval literature (and I know not where in any literature) is descriptive allegory at once so compact and so vivid. Here for once allegory becomes a living thing, healthy, full-blooded, high-coloured, fascinating. The Canto may be enjoyed without analysis, as one enjoys a gorgeous frieze or panel painting. Those will be best able to analyse it who best know the Bible, especially the Apocalypse and the Book of Ezekiel. It is the purpose of the present editor to interrupt the reader rather infrequently; the student of details will find in Vandelli's third issue of his eighth edition of Scartazzini precisely one hundred references, scriptural, Dantean, and profane, to this Canto alone! It is easier to take the picture to pieces than to put it together again.

I. 50. The seven golden candlesticks of the Judaic cult, exalted by Christian symbolism, and in the imagination of Dante a more glorious Septentrion (Canto xxx, first line). Each candle leaves a trail of one of the colours of the rainbow.

II. 55-7. Giving the final touch to the principle that Human Reason is impotent in the presence of Revelation.

I. 60. Referring to the stately wedding processions of old time, of which there are interesting early paintings, e.g., 'The Wedding of Baccio Adimari and Lina Ricasoli' (reproduced by the photographer, Alinari).

*l.* 77. The lunar and solar spectrum.  
*l.* 83. Books of the Old Testament.  
*l.* 92. The Gospels.  
*l.* 108. The Gryphon who draws the Car of the Church typifies the union of the Divine and the human in the Saviour. The middle stripe of the seven colours is between his wings.

*l.* 122. Love.  
*l.* 124. Hope.  
*l.* 126. Faith.

*ll.* 130-2. The cardinal virtues, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude, led by Prudence, who sees past, present, future.

*ll.* 136-8. 'Luke, the beloved physician' is the follower of the father of medicine, Hippocrates, whom Nature created for her favourite animals (Mankind). Cf. *Paradiso xi*, ll. 4-5.

*l.* 139. St. Paul: cf. the imagery of Ephesians vi. 11-17.

*ll.* 142-4. Minor Epistles and Apocalypse (Revelation of St. John the Divine).

*ll.* 147-8. The white lily being emblem of Faith; the flowers of crimson and rose, of Love.

## CANTO XXX

*The Reproaches of Beatrice*

- 1 When the Septentrion of highest Heaven  
that set or rising never knew, nor pall  
of any cloud save that of sin, had given
- 4 To every creature there processional  
such due direction as is ever sought  
from that below by homing pilots all,—
- 7 When that stood still, the people true of thought  
first come 'twixt Gryphon and Septentrion,  
as to their peace turned to the Chariot.
- 10 *Come with me, with me, Bride, from Lebanon,*  
did one, like messenger from Heaven, cry thrice  
singing, and so the others every one.
- 13 As shall the blest at the last trumpet rise,  
every one lightly from his hollow urn  
with Hallelujah on revestured voice,
- 16 So on the Car Divine did I discern  
a hundred at such Elder's call upstand,  
angels and ministers of life eterne.
- 19 *Blessed be thou that comest!* cried that band,  
filling the air with flowers along the way,  
*O give ye lilies all with liberal hand!*
- 22 As I have often seen at break of day  
the eastern region of the sky all rose,  
with the other heaven in limpid fair array,
- 25 And the new sun, shadowed with mist, disclose  
a face so temperate these eyes of ours  
could long endure the radiance it throws;
- 28 So in the bosom of a cloud of flowers  
flung in the air and drifting to the ground  
from the angelic hands in blossom showers,
- 31 In veil of white, with olive fillet crowned,  
appeared to me a Lady in mantle green,  
with colour of living flame invested round.
- 34 And to my spirit that so long had been  
out of her presence, which did ever move  
me to stand trembling and abashed of mien,

- 37 Virtue descending through her from above  
attested, without witness of the eye,  
the great tenacity of early love.
- 40 No sooner smote my sight the virtue high  
which had already pierced me through the breast  
before my early boyhood had gone by,
- 43 Than to the left as trustfully I pressed  
as to the mother does the child, distraught  
by terror or by grief, to manifest
- 46 To Virgil: 'In my pulses beats no jot  
of blood that does not quiver; I perceive  
the early flame beneath the ashes hot.'
- 49 But gone was Virgil, leaving me to grieve,  
Virgil, to me a father passing dear,  
Virgil from whom salvation I retrieve,
- 52 Nor all that lost our ancient mother here  
availed to keep my cheeks, though cleansed with dew,  
from being stained again with many a tear.
- 55 'Dante, because Virgilius withdrew,  
do not weep yet, not yet a-weeping fall:  
another sword has yet to pierce thee through.'
- 58 As stands at stern or prow an admiral  
to inspect the service, and to cheer the men  
upon the other ships to prowess all,
- 61 At the left margin of the chariot,—when  
I turned about on hearing mine own name  
which here indeed I cannot choose but pen,—
- 64 I saw the Lady, she before who came  
veiled underneath the angelic festival,  
direct her eyes to me across the stream.
- 67 Though, circled with Minerva's coronal,  
the ample veil descending from her head  
gave forth but faint glimpse of her form, withal
- 70 Austerely, and with queenly bearing dread  
continued she, as who in saying this  
still left the hottest utterance unsaid:
- 73 'Look at us well, we are, we are Beatrice;  
how didst thou deign to come unto the Mount?  
knewest thou not that man is here in bliss?'

- 76 Mine eyes fell down into the limpid fount,  
but seeing myself reflected, did I turn  
back to the lawn again with bashful front.
- 79 As to the child appears the mother stern,  
so she appeared to me; for bitter food  
is pity, and tart in flavour, though it yearn.
- 82 She held her peace, and the angel multitude  
chanted: *In Thee, Lord, do I put my trust,*  
but beyond set my feet did not conclude.
- 85 As, on the back of Italy, the gust  
Slavonic doth the living rafters sheathe  
with drifted snow soon frozen to a crust,
- 88 Which melts and trickles down if only breathe  
the land where shrink the shadows, and appears  
like wax that liquefies the flame beneath,—
- 91 So I remained with neither sighs nor tears  
before the song of them who chanting go  
after the notes of the eternal spheres.
- 94 But when I heard their tuneful pity flow  
more sweetly than as if it were expressed:  
'Lady, why dost thou break his spirit so?'
- 97 The ice that was about my heart compressed,  
to breath and water changing, gushed forth hot  
through lips and eyes with anguish from my breast.
- 100 Still from the same side of the Chariot,  
turned she to that compassionate array  
her words, her attitude yet moving not:
- 103 'Ye keep your watch through the eternal day  
so that nor night nor slumber robs from you  
one step the world may walk along its way;
- 106 Thus to my answer greater heed is due  
that yonder weeper understand me, whence  
of equal measure may be guilt and rue.
- 109 By work not only of the wheels immense  
guiding all seeds toward their destined places  
according as the stars reign influence,
- 112 But by the guerdon of celestial graces,  
which have so lofty vapours for their showers  
that nevermore our sight their fountain traces,

- 115 Such, virtually, was this friend of ours  
in his new life, that issue marvellous  
was to be looked for from his native powers.
- 118 But all the wilder and more mischievous  
is an unweeded garden grown to seed,  
the more the soil is rank and vigorous.
- 121 Whiles I sustained him with my face indeed,  
the light of my young eyes upon him turning;  
and tow'rd right issues followed he my lead.
- 124 When I had crossed my second threshold, spurning  
that earthly life, the heavenly to inherit,  
then he forsook me for another yearning.
- 127 So, when arisen out of flesh to spirit,  
waxing in beauty and in worth, I grew  
less precious to his mind, and of less merit;
- 130 And his feet wandered by a way not true  
after false images of good, pursuing  
promises unredeemed with payment due.
- 133 To summon him away from his undoing,  
the invocation of no dream or vision  
availed to me,—so little was he ruing.
- 136 He fell so low, no means for the remission  
of sin in him yet in my power was lying,  
save showing him the people of perdition.
- 139 For this I gained the portal of the dying,  
and to that one who led him here were spoken  
my supplications mingled with my sighing.
- 142 High fiat of the Almighty would be broken  
were he to traverse Lethë without scoring  
due payment of such viand, certain token
- 145 Of deep repentance with hot tears outpouring.'

## NOTES

ll. 1-6. The symbolical Seven Candlesticks are called the Septentrion of the First Heaven (or Empyrean) because they image forth such guidance in the moral or spiritual world as men in this lower world seek by anxious observation of that group of stars variously called the Pointers, the Dipper, *Ursa Major*, Charles's Wain: Spenser's sevensfold team of the northern wagoner

'That was in ocean waves yet never wet,  
But firm is fixt, and sendeth light from far  
To all that in the wide deep wandering are.'

l. 10. Canticle of Canticles iv. 8. For the threefold repetition cf. the Vulgate.

l. 15. The voice is thought of as taking on the vesture of the body.

l. 19. Matthew xxi. 9.

l. 21. *Aeneid* vi. 883.

ll. 47-8. *Aeneid* iv. 23. Scripture has now been twice quoted and Virgil twice. On the part of the Christian poet of poets this is at once a gesture of supreme reverence and perhaps also an implicit protest. Why should he who has saved others be himself a castaway? Alas! the Poet cannot do for Virgil what the saint did for Trajan. (Cf. *Paradiso* xx.)

l. 55. The Poet here carves, or rather stabs, his own name into the substance of his masterpiece—prompted not by pride but by deepest humility, for here begins his public act of repentance.

ll. 67 ff. As the Lady here assumes the role of accuser, she veils the 'living flame' of love.

ll. 73-5. In the first of these lines Beatrice puts the barrier of the queenly 'we', 'us', between herself and her lover; in the second she withers his pride with scorn; in the third there is implicit but tender rebuke.

l. 83. Psalm xxxi. 1-8 (Vulgate xxx).

ll. 85 ff. As the trees on the mountains of Italy are sheathed with snow by the cold north, and melted by the breezes from the African desert where, toward the equator, the shadows shrink, so, &c. Considering that the man, Dante, stands in the Poem both for his own person and also in a representative capacity, the image is not too stately.

ll. 109-17. By influences rained down from the great wheel-

ing spheres guided by angelic intelligences and directing all seeds to the soil where they may best thrive, as well by largess of grace divine raining down from an infinitely loftier source, this man was in youth potentially such that the highest hope should have been made good in him. For the development of the doctrine that in God's Universe 'nothing walks with aimless feet', see the latter part of the first Canto of *Paradiso*.

ll. 124-6. In his *Convivio* (*Banquet*) Dante explains that adolescence continues until the twenty-fifth year, when youth begins. It was on this second threshold, that of youth, that Beatrice died. What the other yearning was that seduced the young Poet from his ideal is a disputed question which cannot be here discussed.

ll. 136-8. From the wilderness of sin and error described at the beginning of the *Inferno* there was no means of rescuing the Poet except to show him 'the ultimate consequences of sin' (Scartazzini).

## CANTO XXXI

*Dante's Bitter Confession*

- 1 'O thou who art yon side the sacred river,'  
     aiming her speech at me by thrust, that through  
     the cutting edge alone had made me quiver,
- 4 Pursuing without truce began she anew,—  
     'to such a heavy charge is requisite  
     thine own confession: speak, speak, is it true?'
- 7 So great the perturbation of my wit,  
     though my tongue moved, it was with such delay  
     that first my voice had died away on it.
- 10 Granting short shrift, she urged: 'What dost thou say?  
     answer me, for the memories that gnaw  
     are not yet by the water purged away.'
- 13 Together intermingled shame and awe  
     constrained my lips to shape forth such a 'Yes'  
     as could be heard only by her who saw.
- 16 As crossbow, tightened up with too great stress,  
     is shattered when the arrow forth is flung,  
     which strengthless from the target falls, no less
- 19 Was I beneath this heavy charge unstrung,  
     pouring forth tears and sighs, and so undone  
     the faltering voice was slow upon my tongue.
- 22 'In thy desires of me that led thee on  
     to love the Good Supreme,' then did she say,  
     'beeyond which aspiration there is none,
- 25 What thwarting trenches or what cables lay  
     across the avenue of thy advance,  
     that thou hadst need to strip thy hope away?
- 28 And what allurements in the countenance  
     of others, or what advantage didst thou spy  
     that thou shouldst linger for their dalliance?'
- 31 After the heaving of a bitter sigh  
     my lips for utterance were almost sealed  
     and with great effort shaped out a reply.
- 34 Weeping I murmured: 'Present things that yield  
     fallacious joy, allured my steps aside

- 37 And she: 'Hadst thou been silent, or denied  
what is confessed, the record would allege  
thy guilt no less, by such a Judge desried.'
- 40 But when the sinner's scarlet cheeks are pledge  
of self-accusal, in our Court and Fane  
the grindstone is whirled back to blunt the edge.
- 43 Howbeit, in order that thou now sustain  
shame for thy fault, and be of stouter soul  
when thou shalt hear the Sirens sing again,
- 46 Awhile the sowing of thy tears control,  
and hearken how my flesh when laid away  
ought to have led thee to the counter-goal.
- 49 Never did Nature, never Art convey  
such rapture to thee as those features fair  
that held me, and are scattered in decay,
- 52 And if my dying left thy soul so bare  
of joy supreme, what mortal hankerings  
ought ever have allured to baser care?
- 55 At the first shaft of perishable things  
thou oughtest truly to have soared aloof  
with me from such concern; nor should thy wings
- 58 Have been weighed downward to abide the proof  
of further strokes, whether of dainty maid  
or other vanity of brief behoof.
- 61 For two or three the fledgling may be stayed,  
but in the sight of the full-plumaged bird  
vainly the bolt is sped or net is laid.'
- 64 As children stand abashed without a word,  
but listening with eyes upon the ground,  
conscious and sorry for the fault incurred,
- 67 So stood I; and she said: 'Since thou hast found  
pain in the hearing, lift thy beard,—thou must  
receive, by looking, yet more grievous wound.'
- 70 With less reluctance is an oak robust  
wrenched up by gale that scours across the sprays  
from Libia, or striken by our Alpine gust,
- 73 Than did I at her word my chin upraise;  
and when by 'beard' invited to the viewing,  
full well I felt the venom of the phrase.

- 76 And my uplifted eyes, their gaze renewing,  
     plainly distinguished those primordial creatures  
     how they were pausing from their blossom-strewing;
- 79 And these mine eyes, as yet uncertain teachers,  
     showed Beatrice turned to the Animal  
     that is one single Person in two natures.
- 82 Beneath her veil, beyond the stream withal,  
     she seemed beyond her ancient self to go  
     more than outwent she here the others all.
- 85 The nettle of remorse there pricked me so  
     that what once most with love seductive drew  
     now most of all things seemed to be my foe.
- 88 Such self-conviction gnawed my conscience through,  
     I fell undone; what then upon me passed,  
     that knows she best who gave me cause thereto.
- 91 When heart revived my outward sense at last,  
     appeared the Lady whom I had found alone,  
     above me, saying: 'Hold fast to me, hold fast!'
- 94 Me throat-high in the river had she drawn,  
     and, haling me behind her, was she light  
     as any shuttle o'er the water gone.
- 97 When I drew nigh the margin benedight,  
     *Purge me*, so sweetly did I hear the sound,  
     remember it I cannot, much less write.
- 100 The Lady fair then put her arms around  
     my head, and plunged me under, so embraced,  
     till fain to drink the water; then she crowned
- 103 The whole by leading me, thus rendered chaste,  
     into the dance of the four Ladies fair  
     who each with guardian arm my shoulder graced.
- 106 'Here we are nymphs, and stars in Heaven: or ere  
     Beatrice had descended to the earth,  
     we were ordained as handmaidens to her.'
- 109 We lead thee to her eyes; but by the worth  
     of yonder three who gaze with deeper quest,  
     thine will be sharpened for their lustrous mirth.'
- 112 So first they sang; then to the Gryphon's breast  
     led me along with them; and at that spot  
     toward us turned, was Beatrice at rest.

- 115 'Be vigilant to spare thy gazing not:  
    we have stationed thee before the emeralds, whence  
        Love formerly his arrows at thee shot.'
- 118 Thronging desires, beyond all flame intense,  
    fixed mine upon those shining eyes, whose gaze  
        was fastened on the Gryphon's lineaments.
- 121 As back from mirror flash the solar rays,  
    the twofold Animal therein was glowing  
        now in the one, now in the other phase.
- 124 Think, Reader, of the wonder on me growing,  
    the thing itself, so tranquil to my sight,  
        mutation in its image undergoing!
- 127 While full of awe, amazement, and delight,  
    my soul was breaking fast upon the food  
        that both contents and quickens appetite,
- 130 The other Three came forth, their attitude  
    in dancing their angelic roundelay  
        approving them to be of nobler brood.
- 133 'Turn, Beatrice, O turn,' so ran their lay,  
    'thy holy eyes upon thy servant leal  
        who moved his steps to thee from far away.'
- 136 Of thy grace to us, graciously reveal  
    thy smile to him, so that he may discern  
        the second beauty which thou dost conceal.'
- 139 O splendour of the living light eterne,  
    what dreamidg poet ever has so paled  
        in shadow of Parnassus, or at its urn
- 142 So drunken, that his heart would not have failed  
    endeavouring to render thee, how fair,  
        beneath the harmony of heaven unveiled
- 145 When opening thy beauty to the air?

## NOTES

*ll. 1-3.* The cutting edge that made Dante quiver is the intolerably sweet and unsparing review of his life in the foregoing address of Beatrice to the angels (cf. preceding Canto, l. 57).

*l. 22.* The phrase 'in thy desires of me' translates 'per entro i miei desiri'—within my desires. Dante often uses in his pregnant way this objective genitive. See especially *Paradiso* v. 105.

*l. 36.* For the 'your' instead of 'thy' cf. xxx. 73; xxxiii. 29 and 92. Several like instances occur in the Poem, notably *Paradiso* xvi. 10.

*l. 59.* Who or what was this 'dainty maid' (*pargoletta*)? A woman of flesh and blood or an abstraction like her he celebrates in the *Banquet*? We do not know.

*l. 62.* 'In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird', Proverbs i. 17. But Dante, following the Vulgate, has the word 'pennuti'—full-plumaged birds. .

*l. 77.* The angels.

*ll. 92-102.* Matilda draws Dante through Lethë, which takes away grievous remembrance of personal sin.

\* *l. 104.* The Cardinal Virtues (cf. Canto xxix, ll. 130-2).

*l. 110.* The Christian Graces (Canto xxix, ll. 121-9).

*ll. 115-26.* Dante sees the mystery of the union of the human with the divine nature, not directly, but reflected in the emerald eyes of Beatrice. Looking directly at the form, it appears still the same, while in her eyes the image is transfigured. So Shelley saw the ideal Athens reflected:

'Within the surface of Time's fleeting river  
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay  
Immovably unquiet, and forever  
It trembles, but it cannot pass away.'

*l. 139 to end.* Here, as often elsewhere, the Poet's expression of his despair of picturing things beyond the reach of language, becomes the most suggestive of appeals to the imagination.

## CANTO XXXII

*Allegory of the Evil Days of the Church*

- 1 So steadfast and attentive was my eye  
     to satisfy my thirst decennial,  
     all other sense did in abeyance lie;
- 4 And so her holy smiling made me fall  
     in the old toils, that my indifference  
     inclosed me on every side as with a wall;
- 7 When force perforce my sight was shifted thence  
     tow'rd my left hand by those Divinities,  
     because I heard from them a 'Too intense!'
- 10 And that condition of the sight, which is  
     in eyes but lately smitten by the sun,  
     cancelled awhile my vision after this.
- 13 But when my sight was for the less rewon  
     (the less compared with that superior  
     splendour from which perforce I had withdrawn),
- 16 Turned on the right flank face about, once more  
     the glorious army stood to me revealed  
     with sun and with the seven flames before.
- 19 As changes front, 'neath cover of the shield,  
     a squadron with the standard, while yet not  
     the body of the army can have wheeled,
- 22 The knighthood of the heavenly realm that brought  
     the van up, all had wheeled and passed us by  
     ere the front beam had turned the Chariot.
- 25 Back to the wheels did then the damsels hie,  
     whereat the Gryphon moved his blessed charge  
     so that no feather of him shook thereby.
- 28 The Lady fair who drew me to the marge,  
     and Statius and I were following all  
     behind the wheel that curved with arc less large;
- 31 And thus, while passing through the forest tall,  
     void by her fault who pledged the Snake amiss,  
     our feet to angel music timed their fall.
- 34 Three flights might carry along as far as this  
     an arrow, haply, loosened from the string:  
     at such remove alighted Beatrice.

- 37 I heard them one and all there murmuring  
     ‘Adam!’—then circled they about a tree  
         bare on each bough of bloom and burgeoning.
- 40 Its foliage, which spreads accordingly  
     as it is towering upward, would for height  
         to Indians in their woods a marvel be.
- 43 ‘Blest art thou Gryphon, that thou dost not smite  
     with beak this tree that to the taste is sweet,  
         for anguish follows on such appetite.’
- 46 So round the sturdy tree the rest repeat;  
     whereat the Animal of natures two:  
         ‘Thus to fulfil all justice it is meet.’
- 49 And, turning to the wagon-pole, he drew  
     it up beneath the widowed trunk,—whereon  
         that which came from it left he bound thereto.
- 52 Even as, when falls the great light of the sun  
     downward, commingled with that radiance far  
         which beams behind the heavenly Carp, anon
- 55 Burgeon our trees, and each its singular  
     colour renews, before the sun has set  
         yoke on his coursers under other star:
- 58 So did the tree, of fronds so naked yet,  
     revive and open out into a hue  
         less than of rose and more than violet.
- 61 What hymn that throng then sang, I never knew,—  
     a matter not intoned in human chants,—  
         nor could I bear the melody all through.
- 64 O could I picture sinking into trance  
     those cruel eyes, of Syrinx hearing tell,  
         those eyes that paid so dear long vigilance,
- 67 Into what drowsihood hereon I fell,  
     like painter from the life would I portray:  
         who would, must know to image slumber well.
- 70 Whence pass I to my waking, and I say  
     a dazzling splendour rent the veil from me  
         of slumber, and a calling: ‘Rise, why stay?’
- 73 As, to see blossoms of the apple tree  
     that makes the angels eager to be fed,  
         and marriage feasts in Heaven eternally,

- 76 Peter and James and John were upward led,  
and, overcome, recovered at the word  
of Him who broke the slumbers of the dead,  
79 And saw their band to what it was restored  
by loss of Moses and Elias too,  
and changed again the raiment of the Lord;  
82 So I recovered, and so did I view  
above me standing that compassionate Guide,  
who my first steps along the river drew.  
85 'And where is Beatrice?'—perplexed I cried;  
'Sitting beneath the foliage freshly sprung,  
upon its root behold her,' she replied.  
88 'Behold around her the companion throng;  
the others with the Gryphon upward speeding,  
singing a sweeter and a deeper song.'  
91 And if she spoke more words than the preceding  
I know not, so mine eyes were fixed upon  
her who had shut me off from other heeding.  
94 Alone upon the bare earth sat she down,  
left there as warden of the Chariot  
I saw made fast by Creature two-in-one.  
97 The seven nymphs a ring around her wrought,  
and in their hands the seven lampads lay  
that Aquilo and Auster extinguish not.  
100 'Here art thou forester but a brief day,  
and of that Rome where Christ is Roman, then  
shalt thou a burgess with me be for aye.  
103 Whence, for the benefit of erring men,  
observe the Car, and what thou canst descry,  
having returned to earth, take heed to pen.'  
106 So Beatrice commanded, and so I,  
to very foot of her commands devote,  
whither she willed gave all my mind and eye.  
109 Never with fall so swift the lightning smote  
out of a heavy cloud-bank, when it showers  
down from that bourn which stretches most remote,  
112 As now beheld I through the leafy bowers  
swoop down the bird of Jupiter amain,  
rending the bark and the fresh leaves and flowers,

- 115 Thereon with all his might smiting the Wain;  
whereat it reeled, like ship storm-buffeted,  
wave-tossed to starboard and to port again.
- 118 I saw a vixen glide with stealthy tread  
quite into the triumphal Car thereon,  
and she appeared with wholesome food unsed.
- 121 But for so foul a fault, with malison,  
my Lady put her to such flight as bore  
the fleshless framework of her skeleton.
- 124 Then, by the course that he had come before,  
I saw the eagle swoop into the ark  
of the Chariot, and leave it feathered o'er.
- 127 And out of Heaven a voice of sighing, hark!  
such sighs as from a grieving bosom steal:  
'How badly art thou fraught, my little bark!'
- 130 Thereon the earth seemed cleft 'twixt wheel and wheel,  
and thence I saw a dragon issuing,  
that upward through the Chariot thrust his tail;
- 133 And like the wasp withdrawing forth the sting,  
he with malignant tail drew forth amain  
part of the floor, and went off wandering.
- 136 As fertile soil takes grass, the rest again  
took on the plumage, given to satisfy  
intent perchance benevolent and sanc,
- 139 And both the wheels were overrun thereby  
so quickly, and the chariot-pole o'errun,  
the lips are longer parted with a sigh.
- 142 The holy structure, thus transformed, anon  
heads over all its different portions bore,  
three on the pole, at every corner one.
- 145 The three were horned like bullocks, but the four  
with single horn had each the forehead crowned:  
monster like this was never seen before.
- 148 Secure as citadel on lofty mound,  
sitting upon the Car appeared to me  
a wanton whore, darting her oglings round.
- 151 And, as her warder, lest she taken be,  
was standing at her side a giant brute,  
and now and then their kissing did I see.

- 154 But since her roving eye and dissolute  
    was turned on me, that savage paramour  
        did scourge her from her head unto her foot.
- 157 Then jealously and fierce with anger, tore  
    the Monster loose, and dragged so far withal  
        that with the forest shielded he the whore
- 160 From me, and shielded the strange Animal.

## NOTES

*Vision seen in the Earthly Paradise on the morning of the fourth day.*

ll. 5-9. Too intense personal vision reproved by the three Christian Virtues. There is here perhaps a reference to the traces of the early flame (xxx. 48). The four beautiful Pagan Graces had bidden Dante gaze his fill (xxxi. 115) into those emeralds whose colour was held salutary to the eyesight as well as to the soul (colour of Hope). Hereafter Beatrice will likewise check him: 'Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise' (*Paradiso xviii. 21*). Too intense contemplation, untempered by various observation and activity, makes the visionary and the mystic. On the other hand the power to throw a 'wall of indifference' (*parete di non caler*) around oneself, shutting out intrusive impressions, is the condition of all fruitful thought.

ll. 13-15. The transfiguration of the image in the eyes of Beatrice transcends in glory even the stately solemnity of the procession.

ll. 16-24. An accurate description of the wheeling right about face of a medieval column, the squadron with the standard turning under protection of overlapping shields (the *Testudo*).

l. 30. Behind the right wheel of the Car.

l. 38. Tree of Knowledge. The Cross, whereof the wain-pole is symbol, was fabled to be of the wood of this tree.

ll. 40-2. In the second Georgic (ll. 22-4) Virgil had told of trees in India so lofty that no archer could send an arrow to the top.

l. 48. Matthew iii. 15 (Vulgate).

ll. 52-60. This tree, grafted with the Cross, blossoms anew, as in spring when the sun is in the Ram just behind the sign o the Fishes, our trees renew verdure and bloom. Here we have lovely poetry; but what, the reader asks, can it mean in modern application, and what is this colour *men che di rose e più che di viole*? According to a beautiful legend, Seth brought from the Garden of Eden three seeds of the apple eaten by his father, Adam; from one of these sprang the tree from whose wood was made the cross upon which the Redeemer expiated the human taint caused by the ungoverned appetite of our disobedient first parents. So it comes about that this tree represents Divine Justice, satisfied by the sacrifice of the Son of God. But Eternal Justice is the foundation of the Universal

Empire, of which, then, the tree serves as symbol. To make fast to it the wain-pole of the Car of the Church and leave Beatrice sitting upon the root of the tree, thus gloriously renewed, is simply a poetic rendering of Dante's great leading idea, so often referred to, of the political subordination of Church to State. As to the colours in line 60, it is significant that violet hangings are used by the Church in Holy Week in sign of mourning. Rose, as we have often seen, is the emblem of Love, a virtue more intense than Justice. 'More than violet', on the other hand, may refer to the Imperial Purple.

*l. 64.* The tale with which Hermes lulled Argus.

*l. 83.* Matilda.

*ll. 85-8.* Theology left to guard the Church, surrounded by the Seven Virtues.

*l. 101.* The selection of Rome here (instead perhaps of Jerusalem) as type of the *Civitas Dei*, is an indication of medieval veneration for the City called Eternal. Its empty name was a ruling power.

*ll. 1-105.* So far the Canto is one of the most beautiful. The following historical allegory, much less charming because of its subject than that of Canto xxix, may be read as an example of the sort of poetry (if we allow it that name) which made a strangely powerful appeal to medieval taste. This penultimate Canto of the *Canticorum* is the longest in the whole Poem; the penultimate Canto of the *Inferno* is shorter by only three lines.

*l. 109 to end.* Allegorical view of the history of the Church.

*l. 113.* The Roman Eagle.

*l. 118.* Heresy.

*ll. 124-9.* Donation of Constantine, *Inferno* xix. 115-17.

*ll. 130-5.* The schism between Greek and Roman Church, or perhaps Islamism.

*ll. 136 ff.* Corrupting gifts.

*ll. 142 ff.* Corrupt relations of Papacy and French Monarchy. The scourging of the whore may refer to the outrage upon the person of Pope Boniface (Canto xx, ll. 85-90). Dante perhaps here personifies in himself the enemies of Philip the Fair.

*ll. 157 ff.* Removal of Papal See to Avignon. The strange animal must be the Car bestialized by the heads, representing the mortal sins.

## CANTO XXXIII

*The Poet made Pure for the Ascent to the Stars*

- 1 'O God, the heathen are come,' alternately  
     the ladies, now the three and now the four,  
     weeping, began the dulcet psalmody;
- 4 And Beatrice, all compassionate, forbore  
     nowise to sigh, and heard them with such look  
     that Mary at the Cross changed little more.
- 7 But when the other virgins song forsook  
     to let her speak, now upright on her feet,  
     with face the colour of fire, thus she spoke:
- 10 'A little while and me ye shall not meet;  
     and yet a little while,' again she said,  
     'and ye shall look upon me, sisters sweet.'
- 13 Then sent she all the seven on, and made  
     to follow after, merely by a sign,  
     me and the Lady and the Sage who stayed.
- 16 So went she, and had taken, I opine,  
     scarcely ten paces, through the woodland faring,  
     when with her piercing eyes she smote on mine:
- 19 'Approach,' commanded she, sedate of bearing,  
     'in order that, if I discourse with thee,  
     thou mayst remain within an easy hearing.'
- 22 When I was with her, as I ought to be,  
     'Brother,' said she, 'why art thou diffident  
     to question, seeing that thou walkst with me?'
- 25 As befalls people over-reverent  
     in speaking in the presence of the great,  
     when, ere it reach the lip, the voice is spent,
- 28 So I, inapt for sound articulate,  
     began: 'You know, my Lady, what beseems  
     to me, because you know my poor estate.'
- 31 'I would not have thee henceforth by extremes  
     of fear and shame,' she answered, 'made to quail,  
     nor would I have thee speak like one in dreams.'
- 34 Know that the vessel rent by dragon-tail,  
     was and is not: but be the guilty aware  
     that Divine Vengeance fears no coat of mail.

- 37 Not always shall remain without an heir  
the Eagle that emplumed the Chariot, whence  
it grew a monster and then a prey: I bear
- 40 Sure witness, and foretell an influence  
of stars already close at hand to give  
an era free from all impediments,
- 43 Wherein One, a Five-hundred Ten and Five,  
God-sent, shall with the harlot do to death  
that giant who doth now with her connive.
- 46 Perchance in cloudy talk I waste my breath,  
like Sphinx and Themis, unpersuasive thus,  
since in their mode the mind it darkeneth;
- 49 But fact ere long will be the Oedipus  
of this enigma, the hard knot untying,  
nor be to fold or field injurious.
- 52 Mark thou: and even as I am prophesying,  
so do thou teach to those who run the race  
of life, which is a hastening to dying;
- 55 And bear in mind, when thou the writing trace,  
not to conceal how thou hast seen undone  
the Plant, that twice was pillaged in this place.
- 58 Whoever robs or rends it, malison  
of very deed upon High God is casting,  
who hallowed it to purpose of His own.
- 61 For tasting it, in pain and longing wasting  
five thousand years and more, the first soul sighed  
for Him who punished on Himself that tasting.
- 64 Thy wit must slumber, having not descried  
how for a special reason passing high  
rises the Tree, and has the top so wide.
- 67 And did thy vain conceits not petrify  
like Elsa water round thy mind, were not  
their joy a Pyramus to the mulberry,
- 70 So many circumstances would have taught  
the justice of the interdict Divine  
upon the Tree, symbolically wrought.
- 73 But though I see that intellect of thine  
grown stony, and so windowless and blind  
to radiance wherewith my teachings shine,

- 76 Yet, if unwritten, painted on the mind,  
    pray bear them, by what token palmers do  
        their staves with frondage of the palm entwine
- 77 And I: 'As to the seal the wax is true,  
    holding the form and pressure evermore,  
        so is my memory now stamped by you.
- 82 But why do your desired words outsoar  
    the utmost pinion of my sight, that so  
        I fail of them, the more I strive theresor?'
- 85 'It is,' she said, 'to enable thee to know  
    the school that thou hast followed,—to display  
        how lamely it can follow where I go;
- 88 And that thou mayst perceive your human way  
    as far from the Divine, as is remote  
        from Earth the Heaven that highest speeds aw
- 91 Wherewithal I answered her: 'I have forgot  
    that ever I estranged myself from you;  
        and qualms of conscience for it have I not.'
- 94 'And if it has been blotted from thy view,  
    now recollect,' her smiling answer went,  
        'how thou hast drunk of Lethë but anew;
- 97 So that, if smoke of fire is argument,  
    thus to forget affords clear evidence  
        of guilt in thy desire elsewhere intent.
- 100 Be that as may, my oracles from hence  
    shall be unveiled, far as to show their faces  
        may be appropriate to thy rude sense.'
- 103 More brilliant now and with more lingering pace  
    the sun along the noonday circle drew,  
        that shifts as viewed from this or other places,
- 106 When halted (even as halts a person who  
    as guide to travellers goes on before,  
        finding new thing or trace of something new),
- 109 The seven ladies by a shadowy shore:  
    green foliage and glooming branches throw  
        such shadow over mountain torrents frore.
- 112 In front, methought I saw Euphrates flow  
    and Tigris, from a single starting-place,  
        and separate, like friends at parting slow.

- 115 'O light, O glory of the human race!  
what flood is this that gushes here away  
out of one fount, and separates apace?'
- 118 To such a prayer reply was made me: 'Pray  
Matilda that she tell.' As one who scatters  
suspicion of some fault imputed: 'Nay,'
- 121 Said the fair Lady,—'this and other matters  
were told him by myself, and sure am I  
they were not hid from him by Lethë waters.'
- 124 And Beatrice: 'Perchance some care more high,  
which often renders inward vision dim,  
may have bereft him of his memory.'
- 127 But lo! where Eunoë doth overbrim;  
lead him to it, and in thy wonted fashion  
cause fainting virtue to revive in him.'
- 130 Like gentle soul who does not make evasion  
but lets another's will her will subdue  
obedient to outward indication,
- 133 So, taking me, the lovely Lady drew  
nearer the water, and with womanly grace  
invited Statius: 'Come with him, too.'
- 136 If, Reader, I had only ampler space  
for writing, I would sing, at least in part,  
the sweet draught never cloying: in this case
- 139 Since full are all the pages set apart  
for the Second Cantica, my further going  
'is here arrested by the curb of art.
- 142 From the most holy flood for ever flowing  
did I return renewed, as new plants are  
when foliage is new and blossoms blowing,
- 145 Pure and prepared to mount from star to star.

## NOTES

l. 1. Beginning of Seventy-ninth Psalm. (Vulgate, seventy-eighth.)

ll. 10 ff. Gospel of John xvi. 16. Allegorically, the restoration of the Church.

l. 15. The Lady Matilda; the sage Statius.

l. 29. Dante addresses her with the ceremonial 'You', as if she were a great personage. Cf. l. 92.

ll. 34 ff. So the ardent prayer of Canto vi shall be answered; the Hound of *Inferno* i shall come. The DXV, whatever be the date foretold, may be an anagram for DUX, leader, or it may be the emblem of Christ.

l. 36. This is a famous *crux*. The frank old commentator, Buti, remarks: 'I know not where Dante dug this up.' Others seemed to have devised the explanation commonly given, for which there is no known basis. The learned Torraca finds that the word *suppe*, which he thinks Dante wrote in the form *iuppi*, meant cuirasses. This at least makes sense.

l. 49. Dante read in his Ovid that the *Naiads* were the solvers of the riddle of the Sphinx. The correct reading is now known to be *Laiades*, i.e. Son of Laius, or Oedipus. The editors must conserve Dante's error; the translator is equally bound to remove it. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* vii. 759 ff.

ll. 52 ff. Do not let the fear of the mighty hinder thee from telling men that the deed of Philip the Fair is such another crime as that of the disobedience of our first parents.

l. 57. First by the Devil, now by Philip the Fair (*the giant*).

l. 61. *Paradiso* xxvi. 115 ff.

ll. 67-9. Worldly joys stain, as did the blood of Pyramus the mulberry. Vain thoughts harden round the mind as Elsa water encrusts objects immersed in it. The Elsa is a small river of Tuscany which receives, at a point near Colle di Val d'Elsa, a spring strongly charged with subcarbonate of lime and carbonic acid. For the origin of the stain of the mulberry, see note to Canto xxvii, ll. 37-9.

l. 77. In remembrance of the pilgrimage.

l. 90. The Primum Mobile, most distant and swiftest of the circling spheres, communicating motion to the successive spheres enclosed by it.

l. 91 to end. The last six Cantos of the *Purgatorio* form a tragic Symphony the loftier strains of which die away in the tremulous words of the Poet to Beatrice at line 30. Then

follows a passage of didactic and hortatory Recitative changing toward the close to pure and grave Allegro. Now, from about line 91, the strain alters again, and the theme is pursued in a subdued Scherzo, handled with utmost delicacy, exhibiting unmistakable gleams of tender mirth. The Poet, about to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, is become as a little child, and as such is indulgently humoured by the two noble women spirits. His intellect seems for a moment staggered by the shock of new impressions, and his otherwise retentive memory at fault. How like a child his assertion in lines 91-3! The formal logical tone of the answer of Beatrice to this is only a playful mask, which she deftly passes over to her charming companion, who keeps up the play: 'This and other things have been told to him by me; and I am sure that the water of Lethë has not hidden them from him' (Norton's version). Whereupon Beatrice archly excuses him. The tender purpose of both is, under cover of the comic mask, to give the mighty Poet a breathing-while to steady himself in the flood of rapture sweeping over him. So the composer, instead of finishing in an operatic flourish, feels for the common chord again and finds his resting-place in 'the C Major of this life'.

*l. 103.* It is noon when the sun appears to come to a halt upon the meridian which (the astronomer in the Poet is careful to add!) shifts with the point of view. Therefore if it be noon when the lovers begin their ascension, that is a fact relative only to their starting-point, and matters little in the absolute or eternal sense. (Cf. *Paradiso* xxiii. 12.)

*l. 115-23.* Canto xxviii, l. 121 and following lines.

*l. 119.* The historical identity of this personage, as well as all the other moot points—riddles, prophecy, symbolism, dark allusions—of the last six Cantos (matters not to be settled, hardly to be summarized in marginal glosses) are discussed at length with scholarly fairness and competence by the late Dr. Edward Moore in his *Studies in Dante*, Third Series. See note, *Purgatorio* xxviii. 40.

*l. 127.* The Pilgrim of Eternity, who has already drowned in Lethë all hauntings of sin committed or of evil suffered, is now, by baptism in Eunoë, to be sealed to remembrance of the Good.

*ll. 136-41.* Evidently the Poet meant the three parts of the Poem to be of equal length. He has now gone slightly beyond the limit set by the incomparably terse *Inferno*.

# PARADISO

*'E 'n la sua volontate è nostra pace'*

Paradiso iii. 85

## CANTO I

*Ascent of Dante with Beatrice*

- 1 The glory of Him who moves the universe  
doth penetrate the whole, and shine intense  
in different regions in degrees diverse.
- 4 That Heaven partaking most His effluence  
I entered into, things therein discerning  
none knows, nor can report, descending thence;
- 7 Because in drawing near to its own yearning  
the intellect is gulfed in such a sea  
that for the memory is no returning.
- 10 Yet whatsoever in my memory  
I could entreasurè of the Kingdom blest  
henceforth the matter of my song shall be.
- 13 O good Apollo, for the final quest  
make me such vessel of thy worth as thou  
for the loved laurel-gift requirest!
- 16 One summit of Parnassus until now  
sufficed me, but henceforth the twain beneath  
into the last arena must I go.
- 19 Into my bosom enter thou, and breathe  
as when thou didst pluck Marsyas a main  
and from the scabbard of his limbs unsheathe!
- 22 Virtue Divine! if thou wilt lend me a strain  
to manifest the blessed realm above,  
whose shadowy signature is in my brain,
- 25 Shalt see me pluck the laurel of thy love  
and crown me with those leaves, which this my  
matter and thou shalt make me worthy of. [higher
- 28 So seldom do we gather of them, Sire,  
for Poet's triumph or for Emperor  
(the fault and shame that spring from man's desire),
- 31 That the Peneian frond should breed the more  
joy in the joyous Delphic deity  
when it makes any one athirst therefor.
- 34 From tiny spark flame follows hot and high:  
after me better voices shall perchance  
lift up such prayer that Cyrrha may reply.

- 37 Through different entrances to mortal glance  
     the world's lamp rises, but from out that station  
     where join three crosses with four circling bands
- 40 With a better course, with a better constellation  
     it comes conjoined, sealing with stamp more clear  
     and tempering mundane wax more to its fashion.
- 43 This gate had almost made it evening here  
     and morning yonder; all was there aglow  
     while darkness overcast our hemisphere,
- 46 When, turned about toward the left-hand, lo!  
     Beatrice who was gazing on the sun:  
     never did eagle fasten on it so.
- 49 And just as ever from the former one  
     issues a second ray and upward flies,  
     like pilgrim turning homeward, journey done,
- 52 So did her act, informing through the eyes  
     mine own imagination, give me grace  
     to eye the sun beyond our wonted wise.
- 55 Much is permitted yonder, in this place  
     prohibited our powers, thanks to the spot  
     fashioned expressly for the human race.
- 58 Not long did I endure this, and yet not  
     so little but I saw it sparkling nigh,  
     as iron from the fire pours boiling hot;
- 61 And of a sudden day to day thereby  
     seemed to be added, as if He who can  
     had with another sun adorned the sky.
- 64 Fixed where the everlasting circles ran  
     were the rapt eyes of Beatrice, and mine  
     withdrawn from heaven were turned her own to
- 67 Gazing at her I grew within divine [scan.  
     as Glaucus did, tasting the herb, and thence  
     peer of the other gods beneath the brine.
- 70 No word 'transhumanizing' represents:  
     the example then to him sufficient be  
     whom Grace reserves for like experience.
- 73 If I was merely what most recently  
     Thou madest, Love, who governest the skies,  
     Thou knowest, who with Thy light upliftedst me.

- 76 Now when the Wheel Thou dost eternalize  
    by being desired, made me on it intent  
        by music Thou dost tune and harmonize,
- 79 So kindled seemed to me the firmament  
    by the sun's rays, that never rain nor stream  
        flowed over into a lake of such extent.
- 82 The newness of the sound and the great gleam  
    kindled my wish their causes to assign  
        to poignant longing never so extreme.
- 85 Whence she who could my question well divine,  
    the perturbation of my mind to lull,  
        parted her lips and took the word from mine,
- 88 Beginning thus: 'How dost thou make thee dull  
    with false imagination, not perceiving  
        what thou wouldest see wert thou less fanciful.'
- 91 Thou art not on the earth, though so believing;  
    but lightning from its proper home ne'er flew  
        such flight as thou, thy proper home retrieving.'
- 94 If disentangled from my first doubt through  
    such little words as these, more smiled than phrased,  
        the more was I enmeshed within a new;
- 97 'Already I had ceased to be amazed,'  
    said I, 'but am again with wonder filled  
        how through these lightsome bodies I am raised.'
- 100 Whence Beatrice, with a sigh of pity mild,  
    bending her eyes upon me with such glance  
        as a mother casts on her delirious child,
- 103 Began: 'All things soever have ordinance  
    among themselves; here is the form displayed  
        which makes the world like God's own countenance.'
- 106 Herein the exalted creatures see the tread  
    of the Eternal Worth, which is the goal  
        whereto the aforesaid rule is fashionèd.
- 109 The ordinance I speak of doth control  
    all natures, which through fates of different sorts  
        neighbour, both near and far, their Primal Soul;
- 112 Wherefore they shape their course to different ports  
    of the vast sea of being, each with boon  
        of instinct that informs it and supports.

- 115 This bears aloft the fire toward the moon,  
    this power doth mortal hearts forever move,  
    this bind the earth together and attune.
- 118 Not merely things created empty of  
    intelligence, this mighty crossbow hurls,  
    but those endowed with intellect and love.
- 121 The Providence that shapes all ends, ensurles  
    that heaven in dateless quiet with its light,  
    within which what has greatest hurry, whirls;
- 124 And thither now, as to appointed site,  
    bears us along the vigour of that cord  
    which aims at happy mark its arrow-flight.
- 127 True is it that, as form does not accord  
    at all times with the artisan's intent,  
    the stuff being deaf to the creative word,
- 130 Even so the creature from the way it went,  
    though thus impelled, possesses power of turning  
    away sometimes, to follow other bent
- 133 (Just as one may behold the lightning burning  
    down from the cloud), if the prime thrust be quite  
    earthward diverted by deceptive yearning.
- 136 Thou shouldst not wonder more, deem I aright,  
    at thy ascent, than if a brooklet be  
    plunged to the bottom from a mountain-height.
- 139 As great a marvel it would be in thee,  
    unhindered, to be seated on the plain,  
    as in live fire on earth tranquillity.'
- 142 Thereon she turned her face to heaven again.

## NOTES

*ll. 1-12.* Subject of the Poem.

*ll. 13-36.* The Invocation. Beginning the other *cantiche* the Muses, daughters of Memory, were invoked; here he must look not only to these but to Divinity itself for inspiration.

*l. 31.* Since Daphne (the laurel) is daughter of the river-god Peneus, the bay-leaf is called Peneian.

*ll. 34-6.* The Poet expresses the modest hope that better poets may some time be animated by his example to treat more worthily of his great theme. Cyrrha, ancient port of Delphi, here stands by metonymy for Apollo.

*ll. 37 ff.* Here the action begins. The place of starting is the Earthly Paradise at the summit of the Mount of Purgatory. The time is Wednesday of Easter week, 1300, at noon. It is now some three weeks after the vernal equinox, when the circles of the celestial Equator, the Zodiac, and the Equinoctial colure cross the circle of the Horizon—a moment when the influence of the sun, merging with that of Aries (the best constellation), is most favourable. As the sun rises to mortals through a different gate every day, the conditions cannot be exactly those of the vernal equinox, but almost all the southern hemisphere is lighted and the northern correspondingly darkened. As the Mount of Purgatory is in the centre of the southern hemisphere, it follows that the hour is nearly that of noon 'yonder', while 'here', in Italy, it is evening. At Jerusalem, the centre of our hemisphere, opposite Purgatory, it is midnight.

*l. 55.* As in line 44, 'yonder' refers to the garden at the top of the Mount of Purgatory; 'in this place', to the actual world in which the Poet was writing.

*ll. 64 ff.* Near the close of *Purgatorio* xxxi, the mediatory power of the eyes of Beatrice is emphasized. Here they begin to raise Dante above the things of this world. The tale of Glaucus is found in Ovid, *Met.* xiii.

*l. 70.* No words can set forth the loosing of the ties that hold the soul down to earth.

*ll. 73-5.* The soul, as is expounded in *Purgatorio* xxv. 67-75, is breathed into man after 'the organizing of the brain has been completed in the embryo'. The allusion is to the declaration of St. Paul, 2 Corinthians xii. 2-4.

*ll. 76-84.* The desire for union with God causes the eternal movement of the outmost swiftest of the spheres, which is the prime motor of all the others. The Poet is already so raised and

'transhumanized' that he can now hear the music of the spheres.

ll. 121-6. In the tranquil empyrean, which is lighted with the presence of the Creator, whirls the *Primum Mobile* (that which first moved). See note to ll. 76-84.

ll. 127-35. The Poet here suggests an analogy between the Creator and the earthly artist who often finds his material 'repugnant to command'. Moreover, the Eternal Foresight endowed man with free will whereby he may deviate from the course along which the whole creation moves. Human nature, like fire, is endowed by the Creator with an inherent tendency, or instinct, to rise heavenward; 'Descent and fall to us is adverse'. If we resist the 'prime thrust' (*l'impeto primo*) it is because our wills make choice of some false semblance of the good.

This Canto, together with the first eighteen lines of the following, may be considered as a kind of proem to the *Paradiso*. The only action is the ascent of Dante with Beatrice through the region of fire between earth and moon. Cf. ll. 79-81; also ll. 58-63. As a whole, the Canto consists of the statement of the subject; the invocation to the God of Poesy; the description of the astrological conditions prevailing at the season when the young sun is in the Ram, and finally the succinct exposition by Beatrice of the universal force by virtue of which all natures move to their different ports across the vast sea of being. It is this force which bears the transhumanized Poet ('whether in the body or out of the body') up through air and fire and the impalpable ether.

CANTO II  
*Heaven of the Moon*

- 1 O ye who in your little bark till now,  
eager for listening, have made your way  
behind my vessel with the singing prow,
- 4 Turn to your native shore while yet ye may:  
do not put out to sea, lest haply there  
by losing me, ye should remain astray.
- 7 None ever coursed the water where I fare:  
Minerva breathes, Apollo pilots me,  
and all nine Muses point me to the Bear.
- 10 Ye other few, with neck stretched yearningly  
for bread of angels whereon ye are fain  
to live while here, nor ever sated be,
- 13 Your ship may well put out upon the main,  
following close upon my wake before  
the salt-sea water returns smooth again.
- 16 Those glorious ones at Colchis who of yore  
saw Jason made a ploughman, no such burning  
amazement felt, that ye shall not feel more.
- 19 The concreate and everlasting yearning  
for the Realm Deiform bore us well-nigh  
as swiftly as moves heaven to your discerning.
- 22 I gazed on Beatrice, and she on high:  
and in such time perchance as crossbow shot  
alights and is unloosened and let fly,
- 25 I found myself arrived where sight was caught  
compulsively by something marvellous:  
whence, since my doing could be hidden not
- 28 From her, she faced me, blithe as beauteous:  
'Lift up thy grateful mind to God!' she said,  
'who with the prime star has united us.'
- 31 Around us there appeared to me to spread  
a cloud smooth, dense, consolidate, and bright  
like diamond whereon the sun is shed.
- 34 Into the pearl of everlasting white  
we glided, even as water though unstirred  
is penetrated by a ray of light.

- 37 If I was body (on earth it seems absurd  
     that one bulk brook another, as must be  
     if body into body glide!) more spurred
- 40 Should be the longing of our hearts to see  
     that Essence where we shall behold the plan  
     of our own nature blent with Deity.
- 43 There shall be seen what now by faith we scan,  
     not proved, but primal truth self-evident  
     and by direct cognition held by man.
- 46 I answered: 'Lady, with devout intent  
     I render thanks to Him who did ordain  
     that from the mortal world I should be sent.'
- 49 But tell me, what those dusky marks which stain  
     this body, whereby on earth below the while  
     people are prone to fable about Cain?'
- 52 'And if,' she answered with a little smile,  
     'where key of sense effects no opening  
     mortal opinion may so far beguile,
- 55 Surely the shasis of wonder should not sting  
     thee longer, since even following the sense  
     thou seest that reason has too short a wing.'
- 58 But tell me, what is thine own inference?'  
     And I: 'Methinks what here seems different  
     is brought about by bodies rare and dense.'
- 61 'Well shalt thou see what credence thou hast lent  
     to error,' she answered, 'giving heed unto  
     what I adduce in counter-argument.'
- 64 The Eighth sphere shows forth many a light to you  
     which in their quantity and in their kind  
     may be observed from different points of view.
- 67 If only rare and dense herein combined,  
     one single virtue in all were absolute,  
     now more, now less, now equally assigned.
- 70 But Virtue different must needs be fruit  
     of fundamental forms, and these, save one,  
     thy reasoning would pluck up by the root.
- 73 Besides, if rarity produced that dun  
     thou mootest, would this planet through and through  
     be perforated, leaving matter none,

- 76 Or otherwise, as fleshly bodies do  
the fat and lean apportion, so would this  
alternate leaves within its book renew.
- 79 Supposing true the first hypothesis,  
the sunlight in eclipse would be descried  
right through, as through whatever orifice.
- 82 This false, consider we the other side,  
and if I chance to find an error there  
then thy opinion will be falsified.
- 85 Now if this rareness find no thoroughfare,  
there needs must be some limit hindering  
the counter-penetration of the rare;
- 88 Thence will the ray of other body spring  
reverberated backward, in such kind  
as back from leaden glass comes colouring.
- 91 But thou wilt say that here appears more blind  
the radiance than in regions othersome,  
from being reflected further from behind.
- 94 Such an objection may be overcome  
experimentally, if thou wouldest try  
that fountain of all human masterdom.
- 97 Take mirrors three, and two of them set by  
at equal distance, and between the twain  
the other further off, before thine eye.
- 100 Turning toward them, let a light remain  
behind thy back, kindling the mirrors three  
and smitten by them all to thee again.
- 103 Whereas the further light will seem to thee  
less ample as to size, yet will it show  
an equal lustre, of necessity.
- 106 Now, even as the ground beneath the snow  
is stripped of previous colour and of cold  
beneath the beating of the warm rays, so
- 109 Thy mind, being stripped of error fold on fold,  
will I inform with light so crystalline  
that it shall quiver now thou canst behold.
- 112 Within the Heaven that harbours Peace Divine  
circles a body in whose virtue lies  
the being of whatever it enshrine.

- 115 The following heaven, which has so many eyes,  
imparts that form through various types, and these  
distinct from it, which yet it doth comprise.
- 118 The other spheres in different degrees  
dispose of their distinctive elements  
according to their seeds and purposes.
- 121 Thou seest these universal instruments  
thus drawing from above, while raining down  
from grade to lower grade their influence.
- 124 Look at me finding passage for thine own  
arrival at the truth thou art fain to scan,  
and know henceforth to keep the ford alone!
- 127 The breath of blessed Movers needs must fan  
motion and influence of holy sphere,  
as craft of hammer moves by artisan.
- 130 And that same Heaven the many lights make fair,  
from the Deep Mind that gives it whirl and thrust  
so takes the image and so seals it there.
- 133 And as the soul within your human dust  
makes different members work in unison,  
distributed through each in measure just,
- 136 So doth the Mind deploy its benison  
multiplied through the starry firmament,  
but turns upon Itself, remaining One.
- 139 Each different power makes mixture different  
with precious body rendered quick thereby,  
wherewith, like life within you, it is blent.
- 142 By glad endowment of the Nature High,  
this mingled virtue through the body glows,  
as gladness lights the pupil of the eye.
- 145 From this proceeds whatever difference shows  
'twixt light and light, and not from rare and dense:  
this is the intrinsic principle whence flows
- 148 The dark and bright, as by its excellence.'

## NOTES

*ll. 1-6.* This warning doubtless implies that such sublime interpretations of Nature in its real underlying meanings, ethical and symbolic, as that with which the foregoing Canto closes, and such as the Poet intends to continue in this Canto, are likely to be rocks of offence to the superficial. He wishes to spare Beatrice the mortification of wasting her words upon listless ears. She is expected to deliver to him a moral philosophy loftier than that which he has heard even from Virgil, who, indeed, has more than once referred him to Beatrice for difficult solutions.

*ll. 7-9.* It is significant that the Poet exhibits no hesitancy or self-distrust, as at the outset (*Inferno* ii. 31-42). Upon beginning the *Purgatorio* he especially invokes Calliope (Muse of epic poetry); here, secure in the guidance of all the Muses and of Apollo himself, turning his prow to the high seas he shakes out his sails to the steady breeze breathed forth by the Goddess of Wisdom.

*ll. 10-12.* This metaphor is here a terse repetition of that in the very first section of the *Banquet* (*Convivio*). As to the thought, the suggestion is probably correct that comparatively few continue the voyage of discovery. But those few may enter the true El Dorado.

*ll. 16-18.* The Poet's hand is stronger than that of the hero who yoked the fire-breathing bulls and ploughed the field for the sowing of the dragon-teeth.

*l. 24.* Order of verbs reversed to suggest instantaneous action.

*l. 31.* Heaven of the Moon.

*ll. 37 ff.* Mystery of the union of the human with the Divine.

*ll. 49-51.* Spots in the Moon. For the legend of Cain and the thorns, cf. *Inferno* xx. 126; also *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i: "This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn, Presenteth Moonshine."

*l. 52.* The smile of Beatrice, illuminated more and more with the radiance of the Divine, is a *leitmotif* of the *Paradiso*.

*l. 59.* Dante's former opinion.

*l. 63.* The correct view (scholastic reasoning).

*l. 64 to end.* The astrological theory of the time was that the starry heavens, although of one substance, vary in quantity and kind, and to these differences correspond the diverse influences they are supposed to exercise on the earth and on

human affairs. The same principle, it is argued, must apply to the spots in the moon. These appearances proceed from causes much deeper than mere rarity and density. The spots, then, are no mere fortuitous or meaningless physical phenomena, but rather signet-marks of creative intellect, and therefore full of significance, could one decipher the hieroglyphics.

*ll. 70-8.* Albertus Magnus (Albert of Cologne), whom we shall meet later as master of the master, held this curious theory of rare and dense. But from the belief in starry influences (inflowings), which nobody thought of controverting, it seems to follow that we must look for fundamental forms (principles). The comparisons are intended to simplify the inference that, if the dark spots were not rare all the way through, then the rare and dense matter would be stratified, like fat and lean in a body, or lying one upon another like the leaves of a book.

*l. 94.* The Experiment (the modern method).

*l. 112.* Within the still Empyrean circles the swift Primum Mobile, communicating motion and Divine influences to the heaven of the fixed stars, and so down, through the successive interior and less swiftly whirling spheres, to earth at the centre.

*l. 115.* Fixed stars.

*ll. 124 ff.* The foregoing process of reasoning must appear to the modern mind quaint, and the experiment is certainly too crude to lead to any accurate result. It is, however, notable that there should be any experiment. It exhibits a properly directed curiosity and a method certainly unusual among the schoolmen. What then is the truth, if any, that is to enable the seeker 'to keep the ford alone' in the swirling stream of things? Evidently it is that one must look beneath and behind natural phenomena, for what was then called 'the form', which Plato had named 'the idea'. Beatrice is trying to encourage Dante not to be obstructed by 'unconcerning things, matters of fact', —of supposed fact.

‘One Spirit’s plastic stress  
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there  
All new successions to the forms they wear.’  
(Shelley’s *Adonais*, xlivi.)

*l. 127.* Celestial intelligences.

*l. 147.* This metaphysical principle has baffled many readers, beginning with Dante’s own son Pietro, who frankly records his want of comprehension. Its profound significance has been best set forth by George Santayana in his noteworthy essay on our Poet.

## CANTO III

*Spirits of Women in the Lunar Heaven*

- 1 The sun that erst with love had warmed my breast  
had now the fair sweet face of truth, by proof  
and refutation, rendered manifest;
- 4 And to confess, so far as was behoof,  
myself corrected thus and confident,  
my head for speech was lifted more aloof.
- 7 But something gleamed on me, whence so intent  
to gaze thereon my baffled vision grew,  
that my confession out of memory went.
- 10 As through transparent polished glass, or through  
still and pellucid waters, of too mean  
a depth to have the bottom lost to view,
- 13 Come back the contours of our faces, seen  
so pallidly that pearl on forehead white  
is caught as quickly if the eye is keen,—
- 16 Such faces, fain for speaking, came to sight;  
whence I in counter-error fell thereby  
to what befell the fount-enamoured wight.
- 19 The instant that aware of them was I,—  
reflected images by my surmise,—  
to see of whom they were, I turned mine eye;
- 22 But, seeing nothing, went with my surprise  
straight to the light of her, my Leader sweet,  
whence smiling kindled in her holy eyes.
- 25 She said: 'No wonder if with smiles I meet  
this exhibition of thy childish mind  
unwilling yet to truth to trust its feet,
- 28 But turns thee back in vain, after its kind.  
True substances are what thou dost perceive,  
here for some forfeiture of vows assigned.
- 31 Whence talk with them, and listen, and believe;  
for that which gives them peace, the one true Fire,  
suffers their feet its purlieu not to leave.'
- 34 And to that shade who seemed most to require  
question with me, began I, tow'rd it bended  
like one bewildered by too great desire:

- 37 'O spirit born to bliss, with radiance blended  
     of life eterne in sweet felicity  
     that, tasted not, is never comprehended,  
 40 Thou wilt be gracious to content in me  
     the craving for thy name, and for your lot.'  
     Whereon with smiling eyes and promptly, she:  
 43 'To just desire our charity doth not  
     deny the door, more than His love doth so  
     who wills His Court all in His image wrought.  
 46 I was a virgin sister there below;  
     and if thou recollect, it will appear  
     that greater beauty doth not hide me: know  
 49 I am Piccarda, relegated here  
     together with these others who are blest,  
     and myself blessed in the slowest sphere.  
 52 All our affections, kindled as may best  
     conform to pleasure of the Holy Spirit,  
     rejoice being fashioned after His behest.  
 55 And this low-seeming lot that we inherit  
     is given to us because we did our vow  
     make in some manner void, or did deser it.'  
 58 'Your wondrous faces shine, I know not how,'  
     was my reply, 'with some diviner grace,  
     transmuting them from what we knew ere now;  
 61 Whence was my memory of laggard pace;  
     but what thou tellest helps me to make clear  
     thy features which now better I retrace.  
 64 But tell me, ye whose blessedness is here,  
     do ye desire a loftier place above  
     to grow in vision or become more dear?'  
 67 Her flitting smile lit up the faces of  
     those others; then she spoke so blithesomely  
     she seemed to kindle with first fire of love:  
 70 'Brother, the influence of charity  
     contents our will, alone solicitous  
     for what we have,—no craving else have we.  
 73 Did we desire a place more glorious,  
     then our desires would be at variance  
     with will of Him who here assigneth us;

- 76 These circles have no room for dissonance,  
as thou shalt see, for herein love is fate,  
if thou behold its nature not askance.
- 79 Nay, 't is the essence of this blessed state  
to dwell within the Will Divine alone,  
whereby our wills with His participate.
- 82 So that throughout this realm, from zone to zone,  
we pleasure the whole realm without surcease,  
and please the King who inwills us with His Own;
- 85 And in His Will is our eternal peace;  
and everything is moving to that sea —  
all it creates as nature gives increase.'
- 88 Then only was the truth made clear to me  
that everywhere in Heaven is Paradise  
where Grace Supreme rains not in one degree.
- 91 But, as will happen, should one food entice,  
other than that wherewith we have been fed,  
grateful for that, we crave for this: precise
- 94 The parallel to what I did and said,  
seeking to learn what web it was whereof  
she had not drawn the shuttle to the head.
- 97 'Life perfect and high worth enheaven above,'  
she said thereto, 'a Lady among the blest,  
under whose rule in your world women love
- 100 To robe and veil, till death to watch and rest  
beside that Spouse, accepter and rewarder  
of vows which love conforms to His request.
- 103 To follow her, of maiden weeds discarmer,  
fleeing the world and in her habit dressing,  
I pledged me to the pathway of her Order.
- 106 Thereafter men more used to ban than blessing  
ravished me from the cloister sweet: God knoweth  
what my life then, without mine own confessing.
- 109 This other splendour on my right who sheweth  
her beauty to thee, luminously burning  
with all the light that in our circle gloweth,
- 112 Takes to herself these words myself concerning:  
a sister she, and so from her was riven  
the veil by hands its holy shadow spurning.

- 115 But when she back into the world was driven  
despite her wish and wont legitimate,  
she never from her heart the veil had given.
- 118 This is the radiance of Constance great,  
who to the Second Blast of Swabia  
bore the Third Puissance, and ultimate.'
- 121 So spake she, and in chant began to say  
*Ave Maria*, and chanting from me stole  
as through deep water sinks a weight away.
- 124 My vision, straining to pursue that soul  
to the utmost, when she vanished into bliss,  
turned to the mark of a more longed-for goal,
- 127 Reverting wholly round to Beatrice;  
but such a lightning flashed she on my look  
that first my sight endured it not; and this
- 130 So gave me pause that question I forsook.

## NOTES

I. 2. That the supreme intellect of the age should have accepted such reasoning as the foregoing, is interesting proof of the state of knowledge then, and of the danger of proceeding upon a false theory.

II. 7-18. Marvellous vision: Dante mistakes spirits for reflected images. The lovely apparitions, glimmering like pearls on a white brow, are so dim as to seem but shadows, causing the Poet to fall into error contrary to that of Narcissus.

I. 24. The smile of Beatrice, growing in radiance from sphere to sphere, a recurring theme treated with many beautiful variations.

II. 41 and 58-65. 'Thy' is the singular; 'your', 'ye', the plural, referring to the whole company of spirits. This distinction, far more obvious in the Latin tongues than in ours, is observed throughout this translation; together with the use of the plural forms (you, your) to personages who should be addressed with especial formality.

I. 49. Piccarda Donati (see *Purgatorio* xxiv, near the beginning; also the prediction of the fate of Corso Donati in same Canto).

I. 57. Remiss in execution of vows.

I. 65. Degrees of beatitude.

I. 85. *E'n la sua voluntate è nostra pace*: 'and in His Will is our peace'. The very nature of our tongue renders impossible anything like a literal translation of this noble line in verse, either as to meaning or as to music. To break the line, as does Longfellow, is to make this solemn truth appear a mere *obiter dictum*. The words 'will' and 'peace' are but two brief, terse syllables, better suited to the word of command than to song; whereas the Italian equivalents, in filling out the measure, satisfy both ear and mind. Any reader willing to take the little pains required to know the sounds of the Italian vowels, may perceive the majestic swell of *voluntate* culminating like a great wave in the middle of the line, and having as neighbours mere ancillary vocables over which the voice glides without rest or stress; until at last this mighty force, without display of violence, gently rolls upon our human shore with the whisper *Pace*. As to meaning, one may ask wherein consists our beatitude if not in bringing desire into harmony with Will or Law that governs the world, with Nature, with the Will of God, however variously man may conceive Him?

ll. 97 ff. Santa Clara of Assisi.

ll. 106 ff. Violence done to Piccarda by Corso Donati. Piccarda's reference to her brother reminds one of that of Pia to her husband, although perhaps less tender (*Purgatorio*, close of Canto v).

l. 119. The three blasts of Swabia are Frederick Barbarossa, Henry VI, and Frederick II. For the fate of her grandson, Manfred, see *Purgatorio* iii. She herself, being heiress to the crown of Sicily, became wife of Barbarossa's son Henry, and mother of the most illustrious monarch who ever bore the name of Frederick. During the latter's minority, Constance ruled firmly and prudently. That she had been at one time a nun was a popular tradition accepted by Dante but not by modern historical students.

## CANTO IV

*Solution of Perplexing Questions*

- 1 Between two foods alike to appetite  
and like afar, a free man, I suppose,  
would starve before of either he would bite;
- 4 So would a lamb, between the hungry throes  
of two fierce wolves, feel equipoise of dread,  
so hesitate a hound between two does.
- 7 Whence by my doubts alike solicited  
inevitably, censure can be none  
nor commendation, if I nothing said.
- 10 And I said nothing; but desire upon  
my face was pictured, questioning as well,  
set forth more fervently than words had done.
- 13 Like Daniel when he did the miracle,—  
Nebuchadnezzar from the anger turning  
that first had rendered him unjustly fell,—
- 16 So Beatrice did, and said: 'I see one yearning  
and the other draw thee so, that eagerness  
ties up thy tongue to breathe no dear concerning.'
- 19 Thou urgest: "By what justice can duress  
imposed by others, if persist good will,  
render the measure of my merit less?"
- 22 Perplexes thee another question still:  
"Do souls rejoin the stars, as it would seem,  
and the idea of Plato thus fulfil?"
- 25 These questions balance equally the beam  
of thy desire; and therefore I incline  
to treat that first whose venom is extreme.
- 28 Not he of Seraphim the most Divine,  
not Moses, Samuel, and either John  
thou mayest choose to take, not Mary in fine,
- 31 Do hold their seats in any other zone  
of Heaven than those thou didst but now discern,  
nor more nor fewer years of being own.
- 34 All make the Primal Circle fair, and earn  
life of sweet bliss in different measure here,  
through feeling more or less the breath eterne.

- 37 Not as allotted here did they appear  
within this heaven, but as a sign intending  
the least exalted though celestial sphere.
- 40 My words perforce unto your wit are bending,  
which grasps but by perception of the sense  
what then it worthy makes for comprehending.
- 43 The Holy Scriptures, condescending hence  
to your conceit, with foot and hand endue  
the Deity, with mystic difference;
- 46 And Holy Church so represents to you  
Michael and Gabriel with human traits,  
and the other who gave Tobit health anew.
- 49 That which Timaeus of the soul debates  
is different from that seen here so far,—  
for seemingly he thinks it as he states.
- 52 He says the soul returns to its own star,  
whence nature actuated its descent,  
giving it in the flesh an avatar.
- 55 And in his doctrine haply more is meant  
than meets the ear, and may have sense whereto  
befits it not to be irreverent.
- 58 If, for the influence they rain on you,  
he means one must approve and disapprove  
these wheels, perchance his bow hits something true.
- 61 This principle, ill comprehended, drove  
almost the whole world formerly astray  
in naming Mars and Mercury and Jove.
- 64 The other dubitance that gives thee stay  
empoisons less, for its malignity  
could never lead thee from myself away.
- 67 That Justice here should seem unjust to be  
in mortal vision, is an argument  
of faith, not heretic iniquity.
- 70 But since ye, humanly intelligent,  
can pierce into this truth, as thou dost choose  
I undertake to render thee content.
- 73 If violence be when he who bears abuse  
has nothing to the wrong contributed,  
these souls could claim on that score no excuse:

- 76 For will, unwilling, never can be dead,  
  but doth as nature doeth in the fire  
    which by a thousand gusts is buffeted.
- 79 For, little or much as it may yield, desire  
  abets the violence: and these did thus,  
    free to their sanctuary to retire.
- 82 Had but their will been whole and vigorous,  
  like that which fastened Lawrence to his grill  
    and ruthless to his hand made Mucius,
- 85 Then up the road whence they were dragged, their will  
  would have impelled them, soon as they were free;  
    but all too rare is will so inflexible.
- 88 And by these words, if thou hast duteously  
  gathered them up, is quashed the argument  
    that would yet many a time have troubled thee.
- 91 But now another cross-entanglement  
  puzzles thine eyes, wherethrough thou couldst not  
    an issue by thyself, until forspent. [find
- 94 I have for certain put into thy mind  
  that never could speak false a soul in bliss,  
    since to the source of truth forever joined;
- 97 Then mayst have understood Piccarda amiss  
  that Constance to the veil was ever true:  
    so that she seems to contradict me in this.
- 100 Many a time, my brother, urged thereto  
  by hope of scaping peril, under stress,  
    men have done what they ought not, would not do;
- 103 Even as Alcmaeon,—who by prayer express  
  of his own sire, his mother life refused,—  
    not to lose piety, grew pitiless.
- 106 Think, pray, when come to this, that force is fused  
  with will together, and so the two are blent  
    that the offences cannot be excused.
- 109 Will absolute doth not to ill consent:  
  consenting just so far as it may rue,  
    if it resist, some greater detriment.
- 112 Therefore Piccarda, saying what is true,  
  means absolute volition; I, however,  
    the other,—whence in truth agree we two.'

- 115 Such was the rippling of the holy river  
out of the fountain whence all truth flows over,  
setting at rest both my desires forever.
- 118 'Divine one, O belov'd of the First Lover,'  
I straightway said, 'whose words are in me burnin'  
and flooding till I life on life recover,
- 121 Not deep enough the channel of my yearning  
for thanks of mine coequal with your favour:  
may He requite who can and is discerning!
- 124 I see our mind unsated still with savour  
of any truth, till of that truth aware  
beyond which is no light that doth not waver.
- 127 Therein it rests, like animal in lair  
when it attaineth; and it can attain,  
else frustrate every craving for it were.
- 130 Whence like a shoot doubt ever springs again  
at foot of truth; and so from height to height  
doth nature urge us summitward amain.
- 133 This doth assurance give me, this invite  
to ask with reverence of another theme,  
O Lady, wherein truth is dark to sight.
- 136 Fain would I know if man may ever dream  
with good to so amend vows forfeited,  
they shall not in your balance kick the beam.'
- 139 Beatrice gazed at me with eyes that sped  
flashes of love, divine of radiance,  
so that my vanquished force of vision fled,
- 142 And all but lost was I, with bended glance.

## NOTES

ll. 1-9. Sophism which passed into a proverb as that of Buridan's ass starving between two exactly equivalent 'bottles' of hay. It is in artistic keeping that a Canto dealing so largely with the dilemma of the broken vow should begin with this ancient paradox. Buridan himself is younger than Dante, but the sophism is older than either.

ll. 10-24. Beatrice reads in Dante's face the two questions. The first arises from observing that Piccarda and Constance, who would have kept the vow but for violence, occupy a relatively low place among the blest. The second arises from seeing their souls apparently relegated to the sphere of the moon.

l. 13. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar is told in the second chapter of the book of Daniel. For Dante's most elaborate use of it, cf. *Inferno* xiv. 103 ff.

ll. 27-36. The second question is the more poisonous in being contrary to the Christian doctrine that all the blest are citizens of that Rome whereof Christ is a Roman (*Purgatorio* xxxii. 102), 'fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God' (*Ephesians* ii. 19).

ll. 37 ff. The appearances in the various spheres emblematic.

ll. 49 ff. Beatrice goes on to show that Plato's error leads naturally to polytheism, but concedes that it deserves respectful consideration as shadowing forth the astrological doctrine (so often referred to by Dante as well as by our own classic poets) of the varying influences of the planetary spheres by whose virtue in our world 'nothing walks on aimless feet'.

ll. 64 ff. The other doubt is the reverse of heretical, because an indication of faith. Cf. ll. 130-2.

ll. 73 ff. Violence done to human will, due to laxity which abets. The question leads inevitably to a discussion of the freedom of the will. Cf. Milton: 'Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind' (*Comus*, l. 663). Shakespeare touches the same note with his peculiar power:

'Though my gross blood be stained with this abuse,  
Immaculate and spotless is my mind;  
That was not forced; that never was inclined  
To accessory yieldings, but still pure  
Doth in her poisoned closet yet endure.'

*Lucrece*, ll. 1655-9.

ll. 83 ff. As so frequently a Christian and a pagan example: Mucius burned off his right hand for having failed in the crisis

against the arch-enemy of Rome. St. Lawrence derisively begged his tormentors to turn him over and grill the other side.

*ll. 97 ff.* Analysis of the assertion of Piccarda about Constance.

*l. 103.* Cf. *Purgatorio* xii. 49-51. Out of piety to his father he became pitiless to his mother (Amphiaraüs and Eriphylë). In connexion with the mention of Amphiaraüs (*Inferno* xx. 28) there is similar word-play: 'Here piety lives on in pity dead.' In Italian, *pietà* means either piety or pity.

*ll. 106 ff.* Aristotle had remarked that deeds performed through fear proceed from a mingling of the voluntary and the involuntary. There are two kinds of will, the absolute, which does not, and the conditioned which does consent to evil. St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa* defines the conditioned will as that which consents for the avoidance of greater evil.

*ll. 115 ff.* Now the poet speaks.

*l. 122.* Note the 'your'. But to a being really Divine 'thou (thy)'. Compare St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary (final Canto). So, after Beatrice has taken her place among the sainted, Dante in prayer to her reverts to the intimate form of speech appropriate to communings with the divine (*Par.* xxxi. 79-90).

*ll. 130-2.* 'With me, faith means perpetual unbelief  
Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,  
Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.'

Browning's *Bishop Blougram*.)

And from an elder poet:

'You see, oft shaking of the cedar-tree  
Fastens it more at root.'

*Duchess of Malfi*, i. i. 270.

*l. 136.* Can good deeds make amends for broken vows?

## CANTO V

*Vows and Free Will; Ascent to the Heaven of Mercury*

- 1 'If in the warmth of love on thee I beam  
so beyond earthly mode as must defeat  
the valour of thine eyes, be this no theme
- 4 For wonder, since it issues from complete  
vision divine, which in the Good whereof  
it has attained perception, moves its feet.
- 7 I see how shines already from above  
into thine intellect the Eternal Light  
that needs but to be seen to kindle love;
- 10 And if some other thing your love delight,  
naught is it but some vestige of that same  
effulgence, comprehended not aright.
- 13 Thou askest whether men for vows they maim  
may pay such other service as to gain  
exemption of the soul from any claim?'
- 16 So Beatrice began this further strain;  
and even as one discoursing, who would not  
break off, took up the holy theme again:
- 19 'The gift most precious to Creative Thought,  
most signal of God's bounties, and the one  
after the pattern of his goodness wrought,
- 22 Was Freedom of the Will,—a benison  
wherewith all creatures of intelligence  
both were and are endowed, and they alone.
- 25 Now will appear to thee by inference  
the high worth of the vow so framed, supposing  
that with thine own consenting, God consents;
- 28 For, between God and man the bargain closing,  
of what I call this treasure an oblation  
is made in sooth, made by its own proposing.
- 31 What may be offered then in compensation?  
Weening to use well what thou offeredest,  
thou seekest for thy plunder consecration.
- 34 Now art thou assured concerning the main quest:  
but since herein doth Holy Church acquit,  
which seems against the truth I manifest,

*Commutation of the Vow*

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- 37 Thou canst not choose but still at table sit awhile, for the tough viand thou hast chewed wants further aid for thy digesting it.
- 40 Take what I tell thee in receptive mood and hold it fast; it is the very vice of wit to lose what has been understood.
- 43 Pertain to essence of this sacrifice two elements: one what it treats about, the other from the covenant takes rise.
- 46 The latter never can be cancelled out save by fulfilment; and already so I spoke about it as to banish doubt;
- 49 Hence had the Hebrews still to offer, though something whereof the sacrifice was made might be commuted, as thou shouldest know.
- 52 The former, which as matter I portrayed, may well be such that no offence is done if with some other matter counterweighed.
- 55 But wilfully let on his shoulder none shift burden, without sanction of the Power that turns the white key and the yellow one.
- 58 And folly all commuting deem, before the thing remitted in the thing ye essay shall be contained, as in the six the four.
- 61 Therefore whatever by its worth may weigh so much as can make every balance swing, can never be redeemed with other pay.
- 64 Let men deem not the vow a trifling thing: be loyal, and in being so not blind as Jephthah was in his first offering,
- 67 Who did worse honouring the vow unkind, but should have said: "I sinned"; like foolish plight the mighty leader of the Greeks entwined,
- 70 Whence rued Iphigenia her beauty bright, and made for her both wise and simple rue, so many as hear report of such a rite!
- 73 Christians, be graver in your moving; do not featherlike to every wind consent, and ween not every water washes you.

- 76 Ye have the Old and the New Testament,  
the Shepherd of the Church to shape your aim:  
therewith for your salvation be content.
- 79 If sorry greed aught else to you proclaim,  
be men, and be not silly sheep, that so  
the Jew among you laugh you not to shame.
- 82 Behave not like the lamb who doth forgo  
the mother's milk, and wantonly delight  
in making of himself a mimic foe.'
- 85 Thus Beatrice to me, just as I write;  
then all in longing up to that expanse  
where most the world is quickened, turned her sight.
- 88 Her silence and transfigured countenance  
imposed like silence on my eager wit,  
though ready with new questions to advance.
- 91 And as the mark is by the arrow smit  
before the cord forgets to quiver, thus  
into the Second Kingdom did we flit.
- 94 I saw my Lady there so rapturous  
as to the lustre of that heaven she drew  
that even the planet grew more luminous.
- 97 And if the laughing star was altered too,  
what then became I, by my native mood  
ever susceptible to something new!
- 100 As in clear pool where the still fishes brood,  
aught dropping in impels the finny drove  
to dart toward it, deeming it their food,
- 103 So saw I there a thousand splendours move  
to meet our coming, and every one was hymning:  
'Behold one who will multiply our love.'
- 106 And every shade of them, now nearer swimming,  
appeared as with effulgent glory fraught  
streaming out of its rapture overbrimming.
- 109 If what is here begun proceeded not,  
think, Reader, what an agonizing dearth  
of knowing more would be within thee wrought;
- 112 And from thyself infer how these gave birth  
to yearning in me to hear each circumstance  
concerning them, when they revealed their worth.

*A Soul nested in Mercurial Light*

- 115 'O happy-born, whom sovereign Grace thus grants  
to see the thrones triumphant and eterne  
ere thou abandonest thy militance,  
118 By light that ranges through all heaven we burn  
enkindled so; and therefore, if thou please,  
content thy heart with light from out our urn.'  
121 One of the souls devout spoke words like these  
to me; and Beatrice: 'Speak, speak out free  
and trust to them as to divinities.'  
124 'Well I perceive how thou art nesting thee  
in thine own light, and drawing it again  
through eyes that coruscate so laughingly.  
127 But who thou art, blest soul, I cannot ken,  
nor wherefore thou art graded in the sphere  
that is in alien radiance veiled to men.'  
130 Thus spoke I straight toward the lustre fair  
that first addressed me; whercupon it grew  
by far more radiant than it was whilere.  
133 Then like the sun concealing himself through  
the tempering shade to heavy vapours due,  
136 Concealed himself from me in his own ray  
the holy shape for very jubilance;  
139 In fashion as the following canto chants.

## NOTES

ll. 1-12. The light of Beatrice, an emanation of Divine Love increasingly bright as we rise toward God, beats down at first and blinds the weak eyes of flesh, to which it must in mercy be tempered; as the face of Moses, for its intolerable radiance, had to be veiled to his purblind people, when he came down the mountain after he had talked with the Most High.

ll. 13 ff. All readers of history must have noticed how common in the Middle Ages and even later is that transaction between man and saint or divinity known as the Vow. The votary, in return for some immediate help or favour, solemnly promises some great future concession or sacrifice. Permanent foundations of churches, chapels, hospitals, convents, colleges, crosses, and other monuments were frequently the result of vows on the part of the rich and powerful. A vow of celibacy and its final nullification is the central feature of the plot of the most celebrated of Italian prose romances, Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (the Betrothed). Dante's treatment of the subject is a good example of his ethical soundness.

ll. 28 ff. The vow sacrifices the will, for which, as it is the most precious of possessions, nothing else can be substituted.

If, after the will has sacrificed itself by its own act, you revoke the gift, you by so doing become a thief who seeks to atone by making good use of ill-gotten treasure.

l. 43. Two elements of the vow: first, the thing pledged (e.g., money, some treasured object, refraining from some indulgence); secondly, the pledge or covenant itself, involving the renunciation of self-will.

l. 57. Cf. *Purgatorio* ix. 117.

ll. 67 ff. Cases of Jephthah and Agamemnon. For the case of Jephthah, see Judges xi. 29 to end. The tale of the noble Iphigenia echoes through all our poetry from Euripides to Goethe and Tennyson; but Dante seems to have known it chiefly from Tully's *Offices* (Cicero, *De off.*, iii. xxv). It is interesting to note the agreement of Dante and Cicero that such a vow would be 'More honoured in the breach than the observance'.

ll. 86-7. That happy age could still look beyond the remotest stars to a quickening fountain of life!

ll. 91 ff. Slipping into the Heaven of Mercury. This image of the bowshot to indicate the rapid smooth flight to the prime star is here repeated with an unforgettable addition. Cf. Canto ii, ll. 23-30.

*ll. 97-9.* The joy of Beatrice brightens the sphere on her arrival; if the star suffers a laughing change, how much more the mercurial nature of man and poet!

*l. 105.* Torracca sees here an allusion to Dante's mission in writing his Divine Poem: to increase man's love for the Supreme Good, 'our love' being the love of others for us. As they are perfect beings, our love for them will be the measure of our love of perfection. Cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi. 22 (note on frequent use of this *objective genitive*).

*l. 110.* The Reader thus addressed is one of those invited, at the beginning of Canto ii, to follow in the wake of the singing keel. Some there are who would have suffered a more painful dearth through the loss of the sequent Cantos (had the Poet really broken off here) than through the loss of all the ephemeral literature for the printing of which our forests are being converted into paper.

*l. 115.* Dante is accosted by a spirit.

*l. 124.* The Poet does speak.

*l. 139.* This mode of introducing the next Canto is unique in the Poem, as the Canto thus introduced is itself unique in being from beginning to end the speech of one person.

## CANTO VI

*The Function of Rome in Human Redemption*

- 1 When Constantine had wheeled the Eagle away  
   against Heaven's course, where it was following  
   that ancient who espoused Lavinia,
- 4 Two centuries and more saw hovering  
   the Bird of God at Europe's border line,  
   near to the mountains whence it first took wing;
- 7 And, overshadowing with wings divine,  
   governed from hand to hand the world of man,  
   and in due turn alighted upon mine.
- 10 Caesar was I, and am Justinian,  
   who, to the primal Love obedient,  
   winnowed the laws, and bolted to the bran.
- 13 And ere yet wholly on that labour bent  
   did I a single nature in Christ misdeem,  
   not more, and with such faith remained content;
- 16 But blessed Agapetus, the supreme  
   shepherd of souls, directed me and drew  
   to the pure faith, discoursing of the theme.
- 19 Him I believed, and what by faith he knew  
   now clearly see, as seest thou every pair  
   of contradictions both false and true.
- 22 When with the Church my footsteps moving were,  
   I gave me single-minded to the laws,  
   inspired by Grace Divine to that high care;
- 25 Committing weapons in the imperial cause  
   to Belisarius mine, so comforted  
   by Heaven's right hand that I had leave to pause.
- 28 Here then to thy first question comes to head  
   my answer; but its terms make apposite  
   that something as a sequel should be said,
- 31 That thou mayest see with what amount of right  
   against the hallowed ensign move both they  
   who make it theirs and who against it fight.
- 34 Think what large reverence we ought to pay  
   its prowess, starting from the moment when  
   died Pallas to secure it sovereign sway.

- 37 In Alba 'twas, thou knowest, a denizen  
     three hundred years and more, until the close  
     when fought the three to three for it again.
- 40 From Sabine rape down to Lucretia's woes  
     thou knowest how with seven kings it went  
     subduing round about the neighbour foes.
- 43 Thou knowest how, borne by Romans eminent,  
     'gainst Brennus, against Pyrrhus it o'ercame,  
     and against others, prince or government;
- 46 Torquatus, and that Quintius who took name  
     from hair unkempt, Decii and Fabii so  
     wrought deeds that gladly I embalm their fame.
- 49 It laid the pride of the Arabians low,  
     who passed in train of Hannibal among  
     the rocky Alpine peaks whence pours the Po.
- 52 It led to triumph while they yet were young  
     Pompey and Scipio, and bitterly  
     wrought to that hill beneath which thou art sprung.
- 55 Then near the time when heavenly harmony  
     would tune the world to concord with its own,  
     Caesar laid hold of it at Rome's decree;
- 58 And what it wrought from Var to Rhine is known  
     to Isère, to the Saone, and to the Seine,  
     and every valley brimming up the Rhone.
- 61 Its prowess, issuing from Ravenna, when  
     it leapt the Rubicon, so swiftly flew  
     that follow it could neither tongue nor pen.
- 64 It wheeled the legions back to Spain; then threw  
     them on Durazzo; and smote Pharsalia  
     so that to torrid Nile was felt the rue.
- 67 Antandros and the Simois it saw,  
     its starting-point, where Hector sleeps so fast;  
     then, woe to Ptolemy, roused beak and claw;
- 70 Thence fell, like thunderbolt on Juba cast;  
     then wheeling back into your West it came  
     on hearing the Pompeian trumpet-blast.
- 73 What the next bearer with it did, proclaim  
     Brutus and Cassius in the hellish deep,  
     and Modena and Perugia wail the same.

- 76 Ever doth wretched Cleopatra weep  
because of it,—she, fleeing on before,  
took from the adder suddenly black sleep.
- 79 With him it coursed far as the Red-sea shore;  
with him composed the world in peace so great  
that barred on Janus was his temple door.
- 82 But what the standard that I celebrate  
had done before and was about to do  
for mortal man in every subject state,
- 85 Dwindles away, beclouded to the view,  
if one in hand of the third Caesar seek  
with vision clear and with affection true;
- 88 For Living Justice, moving me to speak,  
gave it, in person of that emperor,  
the glory vengeance for just wrath to wreak.
- 91 Now marvel here at what I tell thee more:  
later it flew with Titus, doing again  
vengeance on vengeance for the sin of yore.
- 94 And after, when the Lombard fang would fain  
bite Holy Church, to rescue her from foes  
beneath those wings came conquering Charlemagne.
- 97 Now then thou mayest judge of such as those  
whom I before accused, and of their faults  
which are the origin of all your woes.
- 100 Against the public ensign one exalts  
the yellow lilies; another this assigns  
to party,—hard to say who most is false.
- 103 Under another ensign Ghibellines  
may ply and ply devices,—for amiss  
he follows it who from justice discombines.
- 106 And let that younger Charles not trample this,  
he and his Guelfs, but fear the claws that wield  
force to flay tougher lion-fell than his.
- 109 Children have oft bewailed by flood and field  
the father's fault, nor let him ever ween  
his lilies to be quartered in God's shield.
- 112 This little planet is made passing sheen  
with the good spirits who have striven that fame  
and honour follow them; whenever lean

*A Just Man exiled*

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- 115 The truant wishes toward such an aim,  
then true affection needs must radiate  
upward to Heaven less vividly afame.
- 118 But that our guerdon is commensurate  
with worth, is part of our beatitude,  
seeing it nor too little nor too great.
- 121 Whence Living Justice sweetens so the mood  
of love in us that no perversity  
can tangle it in any turpitude.
- 124 Voices diverse below make melody;  
so in this life of ours each various grade  
renders among these wheels sweet harmony.
- 127 And from within the present pearl is rayed  
the light of Romeo, whose labours great  
and generous were shabbily repaid.
- 130 But those of Provence cannot gratulate  
who wrought against that noble minister:  
evil to them who other's good abate!
- 133 Four daughters, Queens, had Raymond Berenger,  
and he who crowned them was no citizen  
but Romeo, a lowly pilgrimer.
- 136 By crooked counsel moved, the Master then  
calls to account the servant just, who clears  
his credit,—seven and five for every ten.
- 139 Then he departed poor and stricken in years;  
but if the world could know the heart he bore  
begging his bread and eating it with tears;
- 142 Much as it praises, it would praise him more.

## NOTES

*The soul of Justinian the lawgiver is made the mouthpiece of a philosophy of history. The Eagle, which had followed Aeneas from Troy to Italy, is made by Constantine to wheel eastward again to Byzantium, not far from the mountains of the Troad (Ida), its original haunt.*

ll. 10 ff. Conversion and work of Justinian. With line 10, cf. *Purgatorio* v. 88: 'Io fui di Montefeltro; io son Bonconte', and the humility of the soul of him who had been Pope Adrian V (close of *Purgatorio* xix). The little brief authority, in which they here were dressed, counts for nothing over there.

l. 12. Through the codification of the laws made under his direction, 'the public reason of the Romans' (as Gibbon says) has been transfused into the institutions of the modern world.

ll. 13-21. Theodora, wife of Justinian over whom her ascendancy was all but complete, was an ardent adherent of the Monophysite wing of the Christian communion, while he (at least during her lifetime) appears to have been orthodox. She shared the throne with him and, although religion was then literally a *burning* question, their harmony was unbroken. Brunetto Latini makes the statement about Justinian's conversion to orthodoxy, and his *Tresor* is presumably Dante's authority here.

ll. 31 ff. Victorious flight of the Roman Eagle from the time of Aeneas on. The story is recounted for the purpose of the practical application made toward the close of the Canto. The Ghibellines, who make the public ensign a party badge, the Guelfs who set against it the *fleurs de lis* of France, are both condemned.

l. 36. The heroic death of young Prince Pallas ('owing nothing now to any of the gods') is told in the *Aeneid* (see Bk. x and beginning of Bk. xi). As to the following fifty lines, it would be pedantic and therefore impertinent to stuff these notes with a hundred glosses historic, biographic, geographic, mythologic.

l. 73. Augustus.

l. 81. With the shutting in of Janus, we may pause for breath; indeed this is the great pause of history:

'No war or battle's sound  
Was heard the world around; . . .  
And kings sate still with awful eye  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.'

It is instructive to compare this poetical survey of Roman history with that made by Virgil in his description of the shield of Aeneas (*Aeneid*, viii, last 106 lines). Virgil's survey is scenic, processional, stately like a triumph; selecting a small number of scenes, he dwells upon each in turn. Dante, on the other hand, darts across the landscape of history like a meteor; no sooner is the eye caught by a scene than another and another swim into ken. The adjectives are factual rather than ornamental: the Nile is 'torrid'; Cleopatra is taken by 'sudden and black death'; the Poet is well aware that the nouns and verbs are descriptive enough to those who know; others will not be helped to see by any number of adjectives and figures of speech.

*I.* 86. Tiberius.

*II.* 88-93. The Eagle executes Divine Justice for man's sin, and does vengeance on the Jews.

*II.* 94-6. When and how, during the two centuries between the death of Justinian and the conquest of the Lombard kingdom by Charlemagne, the Empire was transferred to the west again is not explained. In fact there was no such westward course of empire; the successors of Justinian still ruled at Byzantium, and the Byzantine Empire was yet to continue for centuries. But the coronation of Charlemagne at the end of the ninth century by the Pope of Rome powerfully impressed all western Europeans, and that impression, deepened by the downfall of the exarchate, the abandonment of Italy by the eastern garrisons, and other circumstances, led willing minds to yield to the colossal delusion of the Holy Roman Empire.

*II.* 97-111. Application of the lesson to Dante's time (cf. *II.* 29-33). This condemnation of both parties is the more solemn as coming from the mouth of a blessed spirit who on earth had been (as was rightly or wrongly thought) the greatest lawgiver since Moses. In this survey, as in that more personal and impassioned one in *Purgatorio* vi, Dante appears, in his own dimensions like himself, a *national* poet.

*I.* 106. Charles II of the Angevin dynasty in Naples and Apulia: 'young' (*novello*) to distinguish him from his father. He was much older than Dante, who frequently mentions him, never very favourably.

*I.* 113. 'That last infirmity of noble mind'.

*I.* 127 to end. The four daughters of this great Count of Provence are Margaret, married to Louis IX of France (Saint Louis); Eleanor to Henry III of England; Sancha to Richard Cornwall, 'King of the Romans'; Beatrice to Charles of Anjou founder of the French Kingdom of Naples. Through this

marriage of Beatrice, Provence came to be united to France (cf. *Purg.* xx. 61).

This pathetic legend of Romeo, minister of Count Berenger of Provence, affords the poetic relief that Dante is in the habit of giving after his intenser moods and loftier flights. In the tale there is admixture of truth and fiction; those who care most for historical accuracy may consult Toynbee; here we are concerned chiefly with poetic and human values. No sympathetic reader can help thinking of the exiled and wandering Poet under the figure or parable of the disgraced official. 'Through almost all regions where this language is spoken have I gone a pilgrim, almost a beggar, displaying against my will the injury of Fortune, for which the injured one is many times unjustly held to blame' (*Banquet* or *Convivio*, i. iii). The last three lines are on the part of the proudest of poets a touching appeal for sympathetic comprehension,—so much more desirable than fame, and alas! perhaps even rarer.

## CANTO VII

*Mystery of the Redemption*

- 1 Hosannah, holy God of Hosts, Thou who  
dost all the blessed fires that are burning  
within the Kingdom with Thy light outdo!
- 4 Even so, in time to its own music turning,  
that being on whom two splendours form a crest,  
chanted, as well I saw, the while discerning
- 7 How he began to dance with all the rest,  
and like swift sparklets with velocity  
and sudden distance veiled them from my quest,
- 10 In doubt I was repeating inwardly:  
'Tell it, tell it, tell to my Lady, whose  
distilments are so sweetly slaking me;'
- 13 But reverence, whereby I cannot choose  
but mastered be at sound of 'Be' or 'Iss',  
bowed me like one who falls into a doze.
- 16 But little while so left me Beatrice  
till, with a radiant smile of such a kind  
as would have put a burning man in bliss,
- 19 She said: 'By my unsailing sight I find  
the question how a vengeance that was just  
could justly be avenged, perturbs thy mind;
- 22 But if I speed to thy release, so must  
thou listen well, because these words of mine  
will guerdon thee with reasoning august.
- 25 By not submitting to a curb benign  
upon his power of will, that man ne'er born  
damning himself, condemned thus all his line,
- 28 Whereby the human race below forlorn  
lay many a century in error great,  
until the Word Almighty did not scorn
- 31 Going down to join in Person increate,  
by the sole act of His eternal love,  
that nature from its Maker alienate.
- 34 Now turn thy look to what I reason of:  
this nature, which its Maker made His own,  
did, as created, pure and sinless prove;

- 37 But it was exiled by its fault alone  
from Paradise, for that it wandering  
from way of truth and life astray had gone.
- 40 Thus, by the adopted nature measuring,  
the penalty upon the cross exacted  
did never any yet so justly sting;
- 43 And likewise never was such wrong enacted,  
considering Who suffered, and the worth  
of Him to whom this nature was contracted.
- 46 Thus from one act diverse effects took birth;  
the same death pleased the Hebrews and the Lord:  
Heaven opened at the sight, and quaked the earth.
- 49 No longer deem then difficult the word  
when it asseverates that vengeance just,  
was afterward avenged by a just sword.
- 52 But now I see how thought on thought is thrust  
upon thy mind, entangled in a skein  
whence it awaits release with eager trust.
- 55 Thou sayest within: "Yea, what I hear is plain,  
but it is hidden from me why God chose  
this only way our ransom to attain."
- 58 My brother, this decree from eyes of those  
lies buried deep, whose wit is not mature  
within the flame of love that ripening glows.
- 61 Nevertheless as at this cynosure  
mortals long gaze, though little they discern,  
will I declare why this way was the truer.
- 64 Bounty Divine, that doth all envy spurn  
away from Him, sends burning sparks therefrom,  
so lighting up the loveliness eterne.
- 67 That which distils without a medium  
from Him, has then no end, for permanence  
gives form and pressure where His seal has come.
- 70 That which rains down without a medium thence  
is wholly free, since not beneath the bar  
of changing secondary influence.
- 73 Things please Him most that in His likeness are,  
for the all-irradiant sacred glow must be  
most living in the things most similar.

- 432                  *Human Atonement Inadequate*
- 76 These coigns of vantage all humanity  
    inherits, and, if one of these it wants,  
    falls force perforce from its nobility.
- 79 Sin only is man's disinheritance,  
    rendering him unlike the Highest Good  
    and less blanched therefore by its radiance,
- 82 And never he gains his former altitude  
    except he fill the guilty void again,  
    just penalty for pleasure ill-pursued.
- 85 Your nature, sinning in your Sire amain,  
    from such advantages as these was barred  
    even as from Paradise; and such the stain
- 88 That in no manner could they be restored,  
    if thou with subtle wit the matter heed,  
    except by passing one or the other ford:
- 91 Either that God's sole clemency concede  
    redemption, or that human foolishness  
    should expiated be by human deed.
- 94 Now let thine eye pierce into the abyss  
    of the eternal counsel, close intent  
    as possible to my discourse of this.
- 97 Man could, within his finite limits pent,  
    never atone, his pinions downward weighing  
    with meekness and thereafter obedient,
- 100 Far as he planned to soar by disobeying;  
    and this is why, though man himself would pay  
    his own atonement, he was barred from paying.
- 103 Whence Deity must needs in His own way  
    bring man in perfect life again to birth,—  
    in one way, or indeed in both, I say.
- 106 But since the doer's deed is graced with worth  
    the more in measure as it more infers  
    the heart of bounty whence it issued forth,
- 109 Bounty Divine that stamps the universe,  
    was fain to put in force His every mode  
    to liberate you from the primal curse;
- 112 Nor was nor shall be, since the first day glowed  
    till the last night, so high and glorious  
    a progress on the one or the other road:

- 115 For, giving Self, was God more bounteous,  
so making man sufficient up to rise,  
than if He simply had forgiven us;
- 118 Nor any other method might suffice  
for justice, had the Son of the Most High  
not humbled Him, assuming mortal guise.
- 121 And now, with all thy yearning to comply,  
let me turn back to make one matter clear,  
that we may see it together, eye to eye.
- 124 Thou sayest: "I see the water, I see the air,  
the fire, the earth and all their mixtures stay  
but little while, then to corruption fare,
- 127 Yet nothing but created things were they;"  
wherefore, if what I have averred is sure,  
they ought to be secure against decay.
- 130 The angels, brother, and the country pure  
wherein thou art, may be called generated  
in all their being, as they are, mature;
- 133 But the elements whose names thou hast related,  
and all the things that from their minglings flow,  
informed with power that was itself created.
- 136 Created was the matter in them so,  
created the informing influence  
within these stars that sweeping round them go.
- 139 Plucked out from their potential elements  
by light and motion of the holy fires  
are souls of every brute and of the plants.
- 142 But the Supreme Benignity inspires  
your soul directly, and enamours her  
with Him, whom she forever then desires.
- 145 And furthermore thou mayest hence infer  
your resurrection, if thou think once more  
how human frames divinely fashioned were
- 148 When our first parents both were framed of yore.'

## NOTES

*The terse and noble treatment of the familiar theme calls for but brief annotation. It can hardly be said that Milton's more diffuse handling of the scholastic argument in Paradise Lost is any improvement upon this 'reasoning august'.*

I. 14. He reverences the very syllables of her name.

II. 19 ff. With a reassuring smile Beatrice states the tremendous dilemma which his tongue could not utter, and then proceeds to solve the apparent antinomy. Cf. Canto vi, ll. 88-93.

II. 25 ff. It is all very well to find some of the theological implications of the doctrine of original sin repugnant to our sense of justice, and to cry with Omar:

‘O Thou who man of baser earth didst make  
And even with Paradise devise the snake;’

but the fact remains that we do find the earth whereof we are made growing baser because of hereditary taint resultant upon ancestral false choices. Modern science perceives human society to be an infected tissue; few individuals quite normal and sane; crime a pathological symptom; legal and moral remedies merely palliative. Is there any human cure in sight? Perhaps, after all, some wholesome truth may lurk in the legend of the forbidden tree and the free choice from which springs infinite woe calling for infinite redemption!

I. 32. ‘For God so loved the world.’

I. 41. The just penalty.

II. 55-7. Why did not God let man ransom himself?

II. 67 ff. That which distils from God is permanent, free and in the Divine likeness.

II. 76-8. These coigns of vantage are freedom, life eternal, likeness to the Maker. By the fall man lost his freedom and Divine likeness, thus becoming subject to death.

II. 97 ff. Why human atonement might not suffice.

II. 103 ff. Necessity of the Incarnation. Line 105 simply anticipates, the two ways being justice and mercy.

II. 121 ff. The rest is a descent to reasoning more scholastic and somewhat less august. The elements, animals, plants, being indirectly created, are transitory and corruptible. Man, even as to his body, being a direct creation of the Divine hand, is immortal. Hence the resurrection of the ‘spiritual body’ which was given to our first parents (cf. St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv).

*ll.* 133 ff. The elements not distilled directly from the Divine, but through the secondary influences of the stars.

*ll.* 143–6. ‘Your’, as always, is plural (referring here to mankind); while ‘thou’ is used in addressing the individual (here the man Dante).

## CANTO VIII

*The Heaven of Venus*

- 3 The world was in its peril wont to hold  
     that the fair Cyprian was raying out  
         wild love, in her third epicycle rolled;
- 4 Wherefore the ancient people went about  
     in antique error, not alone to pay  
         to her the sacrifice and votive shout,
- 7 But Cupid and Dionë honoured they,  
     this as her mother, that one as her son,  
         telling how he in Dido's bosom lay;
- 10 And named from her with whom I have begun  
     that planetary star which, now at brow  
         and now behind the shoulder, woos the Sun.
- 13 I had no sense of rising there till now,  
     but of our being there my Lady's favour  
         gave proof, because I saw her fairer grow.
- 16 And as in flame we see the sparkles waver,  
     or as within a voice a voice discern  
         one holding note, one shaking out a quaver,
- 19 So in that radiance other torches burn  
     in circle speeding variably fast,  
         methinks in measure of their sight eterne.
- 22 Never from icy cloud so swift a blast  
     swept, seen or unseen, that the interim  
         would not have seemed long-drawn before it passed,
- 25 To one who should have seen approaching him  
     those lights divine as they forsook the gyre  
         begun among the lofty Seraphim.
- 28 And from among the foremost of that quire  
     rang forth *Hosannah*, so harmonious  
         that ever to rehear it I desire.
- 31 Then one of them drew near alone, and thus  
     began: 'We all with eagerness are burning  
         at thy good will to give thee joy of us.'
- 34 Of one orb, of one circling, of one yearning  
     with the celestial Princes are we rolling  
         to whom once thou, from worldly matters turning:

- 37 "Ye the third Heaven by intellect controlling";  
and to delight thee shall a quiet space  
be no less sweet, our love is so ensouling.'
- 40 After mine eyes had sought my Lady's face  
with reverence, and she of her assent  
had satisfied them, and assured her grace,
- 43 Then to the light which did such hope present,  
I turned about, and,—"Tell me, who are you?"  
inquired in tone of tender sentiment.
- 46 Ah, when I so had spoken, how it grew  
transfigured to my vision, and enhanced  
in size and brilliance, joy and joy thereto!
- 49 'The World,' he answered, thus enradianced,  
'held me short while, and had it longer been  
much harm that will befall had never chanced.
- 52 I am concealed from thee behind a screen  
of gladness that irradiates me round,  
as swathes a creature its own silken sheen.
- 55 Much didst thou love me, with good reason fond;  
for had I stayed below I would have shown  
more of my love to thee than in the frond.
- 58 That left bank which is watered by the Rhone  
when it has drunk the Sorgue up, would have held  
me in good time the master of its own;
- 61 And that horn of Ausonia, citadelled  
by Bari, Gaeta, and Catona, and where  
Tronto and Verde in the sea are quelled.
- 64 Already gleamed the crown above my hair  
of that dominion which the Danube purges  
abandoning its German banks; and fair
- 67 Trinacria, which on occasion merges  
Pachynus and Pelorus in one gloom  
over the gulf that Eurus chiefly scourges
- 70 (Not through Typhoeus, but through sulphur fume),  
would for her sovereigns be looking still,  
through me from Charles and Rudolph yet to come,
- 73 Had not the subject folk, by lordship ill  
exasperated, been provoked to cry  
insurgent in Palermo: "Kill them, kill!"

- 76 And had my brother been forewarned thereby,  
     he now were fleeing, lest it work him woe,  
     the greedy Catalonian poverty.
- 79 For he or his must make provision so,  
     forsooth, his overladen bark aboard,  
     that none shall further lading seek to stow.
- 82 His nature, niggard from a generous lord,  
     should be supported by such counsellors  
     as would give little heed to till or hoard.'
- 85 'The lofty rapture that thy telling pours  
     into me, is no clearer, master mine,  
     to my own vision than it is to yours,
- 88 Since thou beholdest it in the Divine;  
     grateful am I,—more grateful still that thou  
     seest it where good has end and origin.
- 91 Thou hast made me glad, and in like manner now  
     clear up the doubt awakened in my mind,  
     how from sweet seed can bitter fruitage grow?'
- 94 So I; and he to me: 'If I can find  
     an answer setting truth in evidence,  
     thou'l have before thee what is now behind.
- 97 The Good that turns the whole and that contents  
     the Realm thou mountest, in these bodies vast  
     makes active virtue of its Providence;
- 100 And Mind in Itself perfect has forecast  
     the natures not alone, but has in charge  
     along with them their welfare first and last.
- 103 Whence whatsoever thing this bow discharge  
     alights to predetermined end, like dart  
     unerringly directed to the targe.
- 106 If not, the Heaven where thou a pilgrim art  
     would so in its effects come short of goal  
     that they would not be beautiful, but thwart,
- 109 Which could not be unless the minds that roll  
     these stars were in default, defaulting too  
     for leaving them at fault, the Primal Soul.
- 112 Dost thou require more proof that this is true?'  
     'Not so; it is impossible, I see,  
     that Nature weary in aught of need to do.'

- 115 'Now say, were't worse for man,' continued he,  
    'were he on earth unsocial?'—'It were so,'  
        I answered; 'that is obvious to me.'
- 118 'And can he be so if he live below  
    without diversity of offices?  
        if well your master write about it,—no!'
- 121 So he by inference drew up to this:  
    'Therefore perforce the roots of what is done  
        among you are diverse; whence not amiss
- 124 Is one born Solon, Xerxes one, and one  
    Melchizedek, another who would fly  
        fanning the welkin, losing thus his son.
- 127 Revolving Nature well her craft doth ply  
    stamping her seal on wax of mortal clay,  
        nor takes account of hostel, low or high.
- 130 Whence it occurs that Esau falls away  
    at birth from Jacob, and Quirinus rose  
        from Sire so mean that sired him Mars, they say.
- 133 Careers of children would conform to those  
    of their begetters, like to like in kind,  
        but that Divine prevision overthrows.
- 136 Now frontest thou the truth that was behind;  
    but that thou know my joy in thy behoof,  
        with corollary will I cloak thy mind.
- 139 If she find Fortune from herself aloof,  
    ever will Nature, like another seed  
        out of its region, come to evil proof.
- 142 And if the world down yonder would take heed  
    to what the rudiments of nature teach,  
        following these, well would her people speed.
- 145 But ye pervert him to a priest, whose reach  
    of nature fitted him for a belted knight,  
        and make a king of him who fain would preach:
- 148 Therefore ye wander from the way of right.'

## NOTES

I. 3. The old astronomers, contriving 'to save appearances', were obliged to assume that the planets move in epicycles, which themselves are carried from east to west with the (supposed) general motion of the spheres around the earth. Milton, living in an age when the Copernican theory was about to be confirmed by Newton, suggests that God is moved to 'laughter at their quaint opinions wide' (*Paradise Lost*, viii. 75 ff.).

II. 11-12. 'The planet fair that is love's comforter' (*Purgatorio* i. 19) is personified as coqueting with the sun, now in front as Phosphor or Lucifer (morning star), and now close behind as Hesperus (evening star).

I. 15. Evidence of the ascent.

II. 22-3. According to the meteorology of Aristotle, winds are caused by cold and, when ignited, become lightning or meteors. Cf. *Purgatorio* v. 37-9.

II. 34-7. The celestial Princes are the angelic order usually called Principalities. The courteous spirit quotes the first line of a canzone of Dante apostrophizing the intelligences controlling the third sphere in which we are. The poem was presumably the great literary novelty (as Grandgent remarks) at the time when the young prince and the young Poet became friends.

I. 44. The critical reader may note the polite *you* here, while *thou* and *thy* appear in ll. 85-91. The discrepancy is singular, I believe, both in the text and in my translation.

II. 58 ff. Charles Martel, heir presumptive to many kingdoms: Provence, east of the Rhone (*Purgatorio* xx. 61); Ausonia (Italy), south of the Tronto and the Verde (Garigliano), i.e., the kingdom of Naples (or Apulia), and Hungary; while, as he was son of Charles II of Anjou and son-in-law of Kaiser Rudolph, Trinacria (Sicily) would have been governed by his heirs but for the misrule of his grandfather culminating in the Sicilian Vespers.

II. 67-70. Here we see the whole east coast of Sicily and the Gulf of Catania overhung by the fumes of the colossal volcano. The prevailing wind over that sea is the stormy rain-bringing *scirocco*. The fable of the giant writhing under the mountain must of course be condemned by a soul in Heaven. Seldom has so much geography, history, mythology been packed into a few lines as in this passage!

ll. 73 ff. The Sicilian Vespers (A.D. 1282).

ll. 76-84. Robert, younger brother of Charles Martel, had been detained in Aragon for a number of years as a hostage. In 1295 (year of death of Charles Martel) Robert returned to Naples with a following of needy and greedy Catalonian fortune-hunters who, being installed in lucrative posts, proceeded to the same extortions as those which had provoked the revolt of 1282, known as the Sicilian Vespers. On the death of the father in 1309, this Robert was to usurp the throne despite the hereditary right of Charles Robert, son of the present speaker (see beginning of next Canto). In line 147 this brother, Robert, is again referred to: his hobby was preaching and 289 titles are extant of sermons by him. The father, Charles II of Naples (and titular king of Jerusalem), is referred to as generous: what Dante really thought of him is seen in Canto xix, ll. 127-9, and in *Purgatorio* vii. 124-9, where, in a curiously cautious round-about fashion the first Charles of Anjou, grandfather of Charles Martel, is rated as at worst better than his son and heir. See especially *Purgatorio* xx. 79-84. It is true that in all these passages Dante is speaking through the mouth of his characters; but here, of course, Charles Martel is made to speak of his father as a son should speak.

l. 93. How can a bad son descend from a good father?

ll. 94 ff. Arguing in the manner of a professor at Paris or Bologna.

ll. 112-20. Uniformity of son with father would make social life impossible. The abstract argument is greatly lightened by this little dialogue, as between master and student.

ll. 124-6. One a lawgiver, one a king, one a priest, another an inventor (Daedalus).

l. 131. Quirinus, the name of Romulus considered as a divinity.

l. 138. The corollary: an application of the lesson.

l. 147. Cf. the long note to lines 76-84. For Dante's preoccupation with the question of degeneracy in good families, see especially *Purg.* xiv, and *Par.* xvi.

## CANTO IX

*A Great Lady and a Poet prophesy*

- 1 After thy Charles had thus, O Clemence fair,  
   enlightened me, he told the frauds, he said  
   that his posterity would have to bear;
- 4 Adding: 'Be silent till the years are sped';  
   so that I naught can say, save that of right  
   tears for these wrongs of yours shall yet be shed.
- 7 And now the spirit of that holy light  
   had turned toward the Sun, that plenteous  
   fountain of good to all things requisite.
- 10 Ah, souls deluded, creatures impious,  
   to wrench your hearts from such a blessed state,  
   your brows tow'rd vanity directing thus!
- 13 And lo! another of those splendours great  
   drew nearer, while its will for my content  
   seemed from its features forth to radiate.
- 16 The eyes of Beatrice were on me bent  
   as heretofore, and to the thing I sought  
   gave me assurance of her sweet assent.
- 19 'Soon be thy longing to fulfilment brought,  
   blest spirit,' said I, 'and give me certitude  
   that in thyself I can reflect my thought.'
- 22 Whence the new light, from deep beatitude  
   wherein it had before been singing, said  
   in manner of one delighting to do good:
- 25 'In that depraved Italian region spread  
   between Rialto sitting by the sea  
   and where the Brenta and Piava head,
- 28 Rises a hill, not very loftily,  
   whence there came down a flaming brand of yore,  
   of that fair countryside the enemy.
- 31 From one root with it I arose, and bore  
   the name Cunizza, and here am overbowed  
   with splendour, since this star prevailed the more.
- 34 But gladly conscience has to me allowed  
   the cause of this my lot, without dismay,  
   though hard the saying, haply, to your crowd.

- 37 This precious jewel of pellucid ray  
    our heaven adorning and to me most near,  
    left great renown, and ere it fade away
- 40 Shall be quintupled this centennial year.  
    Ah, let man look to make him excellent  
    that the first life bequeath a second there!
- 43 So reason not the present rabblement  
    whom Tagliamento and Adigë contain,  
    nor yet for being scourged are penitent.
- 46 But soon shall Padua at the pool distain  
    the water that should wash Vicenza sweet,  
    since mutinous to duty are the men.
- 49 And there where Silë and Cagnano meet  
    one plays the lord and walks with insolence,  
    although the snare is set to trap his feet.
- 52 Moreover Feltro shall bewail the offence  
    of her unconsecrated pastor,—none  
    so foul has entered Malta's prison-pens.
- 55 Too large would be the measure of the tun  
    that of the Ferrarese should hold the gore  
    (to weigh it ounce by ounce would weary one!)
- 58 Which this obliging priest will have to pour  
    to prove him partisan; such gifts are due  
    to match the life that land is noted for!
- 61 Above are mirrors—thrones as called by you—  
    whence God in judgement doth upon us shine  
    so that seem good to us these sayings true.'
- 64 Herewith she held her peace, and gave me sign  
    of being turned to other heed, whirled on  
    as heretofore along the dance divine.
- 67 The other joy, already known as one,  
    swam into vision as a thing illumed,  
    like a choice ruby smitten by the sun.
- 70 Brightness up there by rapture is assumed  
    like laughter here on earth; but they who live  
    below are shadowed as the soul is gloomed.
- 73 'All-seeing God,' said I, 'to thee doth give  
    vision so inwardly with Him imbued,  
    can no desire from thee be fugitive.'

- 76 Therefore thy voice that gives beatitude  
     to Heaven, in concert with those fires divine  
     who with their six wings make themselves a hood.
- 79 Why does it leave me in desire to pine?  
     Not now would I be waiting thy demand  
     did I indwell thy soul, as thou dost mine.'
- 82 'The greatest valley into which expand  
     the waters,' his reply to me began,  
     'forth from that sea engarlanding the land,
- 85 Extends 'twixt alien shores so long a span  
     against the sun, that what was just before  
     horizon, soon appears meridian.
- 88 I was a dweller midway on that shore  
     'twixt Ebro and Magra, which with passage short  
     bars to the Genoese the Tuscan door.
- 91 For rise and set of sun of one report  
     would be Buggeā and my native town,  
     whose blood once warmed the waters of the port.
- 94 Folco they called me where my name's renown  
     was noted, and this heaven is stamped by me  
     as on me once its influence rained down.
- 97 More burned not Belus's daughter, balefully  
     both to Sichaeus and Creusa too,  
     than I while it became my locks; nor she,
- 100 The Rhodopeian maid who had to rue  
     Demophoon's deceit; Alcides not  
     when Iole into his heart he drew.
- 103 Yet nowise grieve, but smile we in this spot,  
     not at the fault which ne'er returns to mind,  
     but at the Worth that ordered and forethought.
- 106 Here we behold the skill which has assigned  
     itself so fair result,—discern the Good  
     which with the world above atones mankind.
- 109 But that thou bear away in plenitude  
     fulfilled those wishes native to this sphere,  
     with something further I perforce conclude.
- 112 Thou wouldest know who in this radiance here  
     beside me scintillates, as in pure stream  
     a sunbeam tremulous in water clear.

- 115 Now learn that rests at peace within that beam  
Rahab, and that our order, made her own,  
bears signet of her in degree supreme.
- 118 Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone  
cast by your earth, all other souls before,  
she, in Christ's triumph, was received alone.
- 121 Meet was it in some heaven forevermore  
leave her as palm of the victorious hope  
achieved with one palm and the other; for
- 124 She lent her aid to the first glorious scope  
of Joshua upon the Holy Land,  
that little stirs the memory of the Pope.
- 127 Thy City, the plantation of his hand  
who turned his back on his Creator first,  
and from whose envy spring your woes, doth brand
- 130 And scatter far and wide that flower accursed  
whereby the shepherd into wolf is turned,  
so that the sheep and lambs are all dispersed.
- 133 The Gospel and the doctors great are spurned,  
and only the Decretals studied well  
for this,—as by their margin is discerned.
- 136 On this the Pope and cardinals do dwell:  
never on Nazareth is fixed their scan,  
where opened once his pinions Gabriel.
- 139 But holy parts of Rome, both Vatican  
and other, chosen as the burial spot  
of the army whereof Peter led the van,
- 142 Soon shall be purged of the adulterous blot.'

## NOTES

ll. 1-6. Both the wife of Charles Martel and his daughter bore the name of Clemence. It is a matter of conjecture as to which is here apostrophized. The younger Clemence became queen of France in Dante's time; the mother seems to have died before 1300, or about that time. The form of expression surely points to the mother! The son, Charles Robert, was deprived of the throne of Naples by an usurping uncle Robert.

l. 13. Cunizza da Romano.

ll. 25-8. The country between the mountains whence these rivers descend and the lagoons of Venice is for poetical purposes the March of Treviso. The hill of Romano is not far from Asolo, which readers of Browning will remember. The Piava (Piavè) River is familiar as the line where the Italians in the Great War turned defeat to victory.

l. 29. This firebrand is the notorious Ezzelino da Romano who enjoys the bad eminence of having been the worst of Italian tyrants—no small distinction! Dante's son Peter, in his Latin commentary, tells the story of the dream of the mother that she was about to bring forth a firebrand which should lay waste the March of Treviso. Frederick the Second, with politic cruelty, sacrificed a daughter to this Minotaur. Symonds devotes an edifying chapter to him in his *Age of the Despots*. In Browning's 'Sordello' he figures as Ecelin; his very name is torn to tatters—Azzolino, Eccelino, Icilinus, &c. He does appear to have been loyal to the great Hohenstaufen through thick and thin. Adopting the marking system applied by Dante to another, we may, to be just to him, rate his virtue at I and the *per contra* at M (cf. *Paradiso* xix. 127). His sister must have been a charming creature, not without a certain engaging frailty.

ll. 32-6. Remorse for sin disappears in Lethē (*Purgatorio* xxxi). Cunizza contemplates without regret the influence of the genial planet which had shaped her destiny.

ll. 37 ff. Folco (or Folquet) of Marseilles, first troubadour, then monk, then bishop. It is difficult to share Dante's warm admiration for this personage. Certainly the prophecy of his fame was a rash one!

ll. 43-60. There is so much local geography and provincial chronicle here that the allusions become rather too complicated for clear summary elucidation. First, it is prophesied that Paduan blood shall stain the pool formed by the Bacchi-

glione near Vicenza (victory of Can Grande in 1314). Secondly, that Richard of Camino, lord of Treviso (son of the good Gerard of *Purgatorio* xvi), shall be assassinated (1312). Thirdly, that the treacherous bishop of Feltre shall give up to the governor of Ferrara some refugees to be decapitated—an act which renders this obliging priest the agent of their murder (1314). There was a papal prison called Malta in the Lake of Bolsena. Cunizza, herself a native of that land, adds that such gifts (surrender of political refugees) match the custom of the country. Finally she excuses her apparent bitterness by explaining that she beholds these judgements divine in angelic mirrors, called in human speech 'thrones'.

*I.* 71. 'What is laughter if not a coruscation of the joy of the soul?'—*Convivio*, iii. 8.

*II.* 73 ff. Dante prays the soul of Folco to reply to his unspoken question.

*II.* 82–93. 'The greatest valley into which the water flows from the ocean enwreathing earth, runs from west to east the whole distance between meridian and horizon (i.e., an arc of ninety degrees of earth's surface). On the coast of that valley I dwelt between the Ebro and the Magra, whose short course divides Genoa from Tuscany. Bougie sees the sun rise and set at the same time as my town, whose blood once warmed its port.' The answer to this geographical historical astronomical puzzle is: Marseilles. Dante's notion of geography seems in many respects to be no great advance upon that of Strabo. The ocean surrounds the habitable part of the globe—which is all in the northern hemisphere. The valley forming the bed of the Great Middle Sea spreads west to east one fourth the distance round the globe (an enormous exaggeration!). Marseilles is only very slightly east of north from Bougie, which was then the most important seaport of northwest Africa. Reckoning upon the meridian, as apparently Dante here did, Marseilles is almost exactly half-way between the mouth of the Magra (ten degrees east of Greenwich) and that of Ebro. When Caesar 'struck at Marseilles' (*Purgatorio* xviii. 102) the blood, according to Lucan's *Pharsalia* iii. 572–7, reddened the sea-foam. The passage is a notable example of the poetry of the map.

*II.* 97–102. The examples, being all of tragic love, suggest that Folco's passion may have had unhappy consequences. Dido and Phyllis of Rhodope took their own lives; the passion of Hercules for Iolë brought about his own death, that of Dejanira, and that of Lichas. But when Folco's locks began to

gray he became a monk and, later, an episcopal persecutor of the Waldenses.

*ll. 103 ff.* He can speak truly and serenely of his time of sin (*Purgatorio xxxi*).

*ll. 116 ff.* For Rahab, the harlot, see Joshua ii, vi. 17-25, also Hebrews xi. 30-1; James ii. 25. From Matthew i. 5, we learn that she was ancestress of Jesus the Christ. Theological allegory found in her 'line of scarlet thread in the window' the prophetic symbol of His blood shed for the remission of sin. The word 'palm' (l. 122) means of course *token*: the reference in the next line is to the lifting of the hands in prayer, of which the uplifted hands of Christ on the Cross are a symbol.

*l. 118.* Here ends the shadow cast by earth, its length being estimated by Ptolemy as 871,000 miles. Allegorical significance was doubtless attached to this supposed fact. Souls in the spheres of the moon, Mercury, and Venus are obviously persons whose behaviour here below was at times somewhat incorrect.

*l. 130.* The golden florin with the stamp of the lily.

*l. 133 to end.* The study of ecclesiastical law is more profitable for the ambitious and the avaricious than that of pure theology.

*ll. 139-42.* Another unfulfilled prophecy.

## CANTO X

*Heaven of the Sun: Starry Garland of Sages*

- 1 The primal and unutterable Worth  
gazing upon His Son's benignant face  
with Love which both eternally breathe forth,  
4 Made all things that revolve through mind or space  
with so much order that whoso looks aright  
can never want some image of His Grace.  
7 Then, Reader, lift straight up with me thy sight  
to the high wheels, where the two motions come  
to that point where they each on other smite,  
10 And there begin to enjoy His masterdom  
who loves His work within Him with such love  
as never to withdraw His eye therefrom.  
13 Look, how that circle oblique, the bearer of  
the planets, is at present branching thence  
to appease the world that calls them from above;  
16 And were their road not bent, much influence  
in Heaven would be unfruitful, and down here  
almost all virtue drained to impotence;  
19 Did it at less or greater angle veer  
from the right line, deficiency were dire  
both up and down, in either hemisphere.  
22 Now on this foretaste of the heart's desire,  
remain, O Reader, on thy seat to brood,  
for it will charm thee long before thou tire,  
25 I set it forth; do thou partake the food;  
for I have made me scribe of such a theme  
as claims the whole of my solicitude.  
28 The Minister of Nature all-supreme,  
who with the worth of Heaven the world is sealing  
and measuring our time out with his beam,  
31 Joined with that region named above, was wheeling  
along the spirals of that thoroughfare  
where daily earlier is his revealing;  
34 And I along with him, but unaware  
of the ascending, more than one perceives  
thought in the mind before its advent there.

- 37 'Tis Beatrice herself who leading gives  
from good to better, so immediately  
her act no vestige of duration leaves.
- 40 Within the sun where I had entered, see  
how brighten spirits into recognition,  
by light, not colour, manifest to me!
- 43 What though I summon genius, art, tradition,  
that splendour could be imaged nevermore,  
but faith may see,—ah, let us crave the vision!
- 46 No wonder our low fancy cannot soar  
to such an altitude, for never yet  
was eye that did not quail the sun before.
- 49 So bright was the fourth family, here set  
by the High Sire, imbuing them with bliss,  
showing how He doth breathe, and how beget.
- 52 'Give thanks to Him,' began now Beatrice,  
'thank Him who of the angels is the Sun,  
who by His Grace has listed thee to this!'
- 55 So ardently subdued to orison  
devoted, heart of mortal yet was not,  
so eager for divine surrender none,
- 58 As at these words my own desire was hot;  
and so my love to Him was wholly plighted  
that Beatrice was in eclipse forgot.
- 61 Nor this displeased her; but her eyes so lighted  
with laughter, that the splendour of her mien  
drew off to other things my mind united.
- 64 For other living lustres, passing keen,  
centred upon us like a chaplet round,  
still sweeter in their voice than bright in sheen.
- 67 The daughter of Latona thus enwound  
is seen at moments when so teems the air  
it holds the thread wherewith her zone is bound.
- 70 Manifold are the jewels dear and fair  
in Court of Heaven, whence I returning come,  
and none to carry them away could dare;
- 73 Of these the carols of those lights were some:  
who takes not wing up thitherward to fly  
may better ask for tidings of the dumb!

- 76 When, chanting so, those blazing suns on high  
had wheeled about us thrice, in radiance  
like stars the steadfast pole for ever nigh,  
79 Ladies they seemed, who break not from the dance,  
but stop in silence listening for the chord  
whereto their tripping steps again advance.  
82 And from within one light came forth this word:  
‘Since radiance of Grace, enkindling so  
true love to be the multiplied reward  
85 Of loving, doth in thee so brightly glow,  
leading thee up that stairway where none save  
to reascend can ever go below,—  
88 Whoever should deny thee if thou crave  
wine from his flagon, would be free no more  
than water seeking not the level wave.  
91 Thou wouldest know what blossoms now enflower  
this garland, circling with blithe roundelay  
the Lady beautiful, thy heavenly dower.  
94 Lamb of the holy flock was I, whose way  
is shepherded by Dominic, and here  
fair is the fattening, if they do not stray.  
97 The brother to my dexter hand most near  
was Albert of Cologne, my master best,  
and I was Thomas of Aquino there.  
100 And' if to name and' number all' the rest  
thou cravest of me, let thy look awhile  
circle up here along the garland blest.  
103 That other splendour issues from the smile  
of Gratian,—one and the other court he lent  
such aid as Heaven with rapture to beguile.  
106 And of our chorus the next ornament  
was Peter, who gave Holy Church his mite  
like the poor woman of the Testament.  
109 The fifth and loveliest of our circle bright  
breathes from such love that all the world below  
looks eagerly for tidings of its plight:  
112 Within it is the lofty spirit, so  
imbued with wisdom that, if truth be true,  
no second rose so much to see and know.

- 115 Next it the radiance of that taper view  
which, still in mortal flesh, did best divine  
the angelic nature, and its service due.
- 118 Next in that little light see, smiling, shine  
that advocate of Christian ages whose  
fair Latin edified Saint Augustine.
- 121 Now, if in sequence as my praise pursues  
from light to light, thy mental eye is veering,  
thou cravest for the eighth, and canst not choose.
- 124 Therein the sight of Good Supreme is cheering  
the holy soul who renders evident  
the world's deceit to whoso well give hearing.
- 127 The body whence on earth it hunted went  
lies in Cieldauro, and from torture came  
into this peace and out of banishment.
- 130 And yonder see the fervent spirits flame  
of Isidore, of Bede, of Richard who  
in contemplation more than man became.
- 133 This one, wherefrom to me returns thy view,  
shines from a soul to thought so dedicate  
that death, he thought, too slowly on him drew:
- 136 This is the light of Siger, beyond date,  
who in the Street of Straw once lecturing,  
had enviable truths to demonstrate.'
- 139 Then as a chiming horologe doth ring  
to rouse the Bride of God to matin-song  
unto the Spouse, His love soliciting,
- 142 Where one part draws another and thrusts along  
with tintinnating note harmonious  
whence love in well-tuned spirit waxes strong,—
- 145 The glorious wheel I saw revolving thus  
and render voice to voice, in concord blending  
with sweetness never to be known of us,
- 148 Save in that place where joy is never-ending.

## NOTES

In the preceding cantos we have passed through the spheres of the Moon, of Mercury, and of Venus, all of which are more or less subject at times to the influence of the overshadowing cone of darkness projected from the Earth (Canto ix. 118-19). Here we emerge beyond the reach of such an occasional moral cloud into the splendour of the sphere of the Sun. In the first twenty-seven lines of this canto the Poet seems deliberately to mark the transition by a succinct consideration of the art of the Creator shown in the deviation of the Ecliptic from the Equator.

ll. 1-3. The three lines of this first tercet (terzetto) refer to the three Persons of the Trinity. It is believed that Dante was moved to his choice of the *terza rima* for the *Poema Sacro* by the mystic connotations of the number three and its multiples.

ll. 8-21. The intersection of the Equator and the Ecliptic (cf. Canto i, ll. 37-9), which occurs at the vernal equinox when the sun is in Aries. The 'oblique circle' whereby the road of the sun and planets deviates from the equator, thus producing alternation of seasons, appeared even more admirable in that age when the habitable part of earth was supposed to be only the north temperate zone. There are some similar observations, less directly and clearly expressed, in *Paradise Lost*, Book x, lines 668 ff.

l. 28. The sun, to which Dante had imperceptibly arisen.

l. 31. Referring to ll. 8-9, where attention is called to the junction of the path of the sun and the plane of the Equator at the vernal Equinox. It is well to remember that our ideal pilgrimage takes place at the very season of the Canterbury pilgrimage, when

‘the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne.’

ll. 32-3. The apparent track of the sun at this season is a spiral one, the line coming a little farther northward every day, as any observer of the point of its emergence morning after morning can easily perceive.

l. 37. Oxford text reads *O Beatrice.*

l. 39. Oxford text punctuates: *non si sporge,*

l. 40. Oxford text punctuates: *da sè lucente!*

l. 42. Oxford text punctuates: *per lume parvente,*

ll. 40-60. In these lines, what exhilaration, what rapture of spirit! One thinks, perhaps, of certain lines of Wordsworth, who never, however, achieves such release. Passing insensibly

from the sphere of Venus, where the apex of earth's shadow still somehow clouds the moral sky, we enter a region of effulgent splendour wherein circle rainbow-like the souls of those great thinkers who have come nearest to true vision of things divine. First, at the suggestion of Beatrice, the poet-soul springs aloft on wings of prayer to such altitude that even she is for a moment 'in eclipse forgot'. But such concentration comes and goes ere one can say, 'it lightens'. The next moment attention is scattered among the new objects soliciting the eye.

*I.* 61. The smile of Beatrice.

*I.* 67. The garland of the souls is like the halo around the moon, when the air, pregnant with moisture, retains the thread whereof is woven the rainbow tissue of her girdle.

*I.* 79. Dancing the successive stanzas of the ballata.

*I.* 83. Speaks the great Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas, Doctor Angelicus.

*I.* 96. Note this line; cf. *I.* 114.

*I.* 98. Albertus Magnus, Doctor Universalis.

*I.* 104. Gratian, whose text-book of Canon Law helped both the ecclesiastical and the civil court.

*I.* 106. Peter Lombard.

*I.* 109. Solomon.

*I.* 114. The reader will save time by taking mental note of this line and 96, for they will be discussed later.

*I.* 115. Dionysius.

*I.* 118. Orosius.

*I.* 125. Boethius.

*I.* 128. Church of the Golden Ceiling, at Pavia.

*I.* 131. St. Isidore of Seville; the Venerable Bede; Richard of St. Victor, the Great Contemplator.

*II.* 133-8. Dramatic interest is aroused and the harmony of Heaven illustrated when it is understood that St. Thomas Aquinas had publicly controverted opinions of Siger, who was one of the most daring of thinkers. He is said to have questioned the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and even the existence of God. Cited before the Roman Curia for heresy, he was stabbed to death at Orvieto by a fanatical cleric. An alternative translation of *invidiosi veri* is 'truths which brought him envy' (Toynbee). But cf. *inveggiar*, Canto xii. 142.

*II.* 136-8. Siger of Brabant, who lectured at Paris on theology. The mention of the *Vicus Straminis*, or *Rue du Fouarre* (Straw Street) in the Latin Quarter, tends to confirm the tradition that Dante studied at Paris.

*I.* 140. The Bride is throughout the Poem, of course, the Church.

## CANTO XI

*St. Thomas Aquinas in praise of St. Francis*

- 1 Insane solicitude for mortal things,  
     alas, how all the reasonings are vain  
     that make thee heavily beat down thy wings!
- 4 One followed priesthood and one followed gain,  
     one aphorisms of Hippocrates,  
     one strove by violence or craft to reign,
- 7 One threw by theft, one by juristic pleas,  
     one in the pleasures of the flesh enwound  
     was wearing out, and one gave up to ease,
- 10 While I, set free from all that dreary round,  
     aloft in Heaven, with Beatrice at hand,  
     so passing glorious a welcome found.
- 13 When every member of that circling band  
     had gained the point where he had been before,  
     he stayed, as stays the taper in the stand.
- 16 And now I heard the former voice once more  
     within that lustre, while yet more intense  
     became the brilliance of the smile it wore:
- 19 'As I am kindled in His effluence,  
     so, gazing into the Eternal Light,  
     I trace thy thoughts back to their rudiments.
- 22 Thou doubttest, and wouldest have me sift aright  
     my utterance, and in plain language bring  
     the matter to the level of thy sight
- 25 Where lately I said,—"Where is good fattening",  
     and where again I said, "No second rose";  
     and here is need of clear distinguishing.
- 28 That Providence which rules the world with those  
     mysterious laws that baffle mortal eye  
     before it ever to the bottom goes
- 31 (So that to wed with Him who espoused her by  
     the blessed blood with loud proclaim, the Bride  
     might go with greater nuptial loyalty,
- 34 And with more self-security beside),  
     ordained two princes who should both attend her,  
     one upon either hand to be her guide.

- 37 All fire seraphical was one defender;  
     the other one with wisdom all aflare,  
         light to the world cherubic in its splendour.
- 40 Of one I mean to speak, for both may claim  
     our praises, whichever one intending,  
         because their labours had a single aim.
- 43 Between Topino and the stream descending  
     the hill that blessed Ubald erewhile chose,  
         a fertile slope is from the mountain bending,
- 46 Whence hot and cold upon Perugia blows  
     through Porta Solë; while behind it groan  
         Gualdo and Nocera their heavy woes.
- 49 Where drops the highland less abruptly prone,  
     a sun upon the world began ascent,  
         as somewhiles out of Ganges dawns our own.
- 52 Wherefore let any, when this place is meant,  
     say not "Ascesi", which were short to say,  
         but, fitlier to speak, say "Orient"!
- 55 He, from his rising not far away,  
     began to give the world some handsel of  
         the comfort-giving virtue of his ray;
- 58 And, still a boy against his father strove  
     for such a Lady, men unbar the door  
         as willingly to death as to her love;
- 61 And in the spiritual court, before  
     his father's face, united with her stood,  
         whereon from day to day he loved her more.
- 64 Rest of first husband she in widowhood  
     till after the eleven hundredth year,  
         contemned, obscure, awaited him unwooed;
- 67 Nor aught availed that men of her should hear  
     as with Amyclas found unterrified  
         by voice of him who struck the world with fear;
- 70 Nor aught availed her faith and courage tried,  
     so that, let Mary at the foot remain,  
         she mounted up where Christ was crucified.
- 73 But lest too enigmatic be my strain,  
     from my long parable shalt thou infer  
         that Poverty and Francis are these twain.

- 76 So blithe and so harmonious they were,  
their love, their wonder, their communion sweet  
in all around set holy thoughts astir;
- 79 Whence venerable Bernard first thought meet  
to go unshod, and after so great peace  
he ran, and running blamed his lagging feet.
- 82 O wealth untold, good fruitful of increase!  
Giles bares his feet, Sylvester his, behind  
the Bridegroom, such the Bride's peculiar grace.
- 85 Then with his Lady and with the house assigned,  
all with the humble cord begirded now,  
went forth that Father and that Master kind;
- 88 Nor did he cravenly abase his brow  
as son of Peter Bernardone, or feel  
cast down by strange contempt. But his stern vow
- 91 With regal dignity did he reveal  
to Innocent the Pope, by whom was granted  
for his religious order the first seal.
- 94 As multiplied the poor folk who had panted  
to follow him whose life-work marvellous  
were better in the glory of Heaven chanted,
- 97 This Master-shepherd's holy zeal for us  
was sealed with crown of the Eternal Spirit  
a second time through Pope Honorius.
- 100 Then preached he to the Soldan proud (to merit  
the palm of martyrdom he would have borne)  
Christ and his followers; but since to hear it
- 103 He found unripe that folk, who put to scorn  
salvation, and lest vain should be the quest,  
returned to harvest of the Italian corn;
- 106 'Twixt Tiber and Arno on the rocky crest  
from Christ's own hand the final seal he won,  
borne for two years upon his limbs impressed.
- 109 When God, allotting him such benison,  
vouchsafed to draw him to the meed above  
that he had gained by being a lowly one,
- 112 Unto his brethren, as right heirs therof,  
bequeathed he all his wealth, his Lady dear,  
bidding them hold fidelity in love;

*Degenerate Dominicans*

- 115 And from her breast the losty spirit clear  
desired to pass to its own realm divine,  
and for its body willed no other bier.
- 118 Judge now the worth of one who could combine  
with him to pilot over the high seas  
the Bark of Peter by the starry sign!
- 121 Such was our Patriarch; and they who please  
to follow him, obeying his command,  
take on such freight of good commodities.
- 124 But now so greedy is become his band  
for novel fodder, nothing can withhold  
the sheep from roaming through wild pastureland;
- 127 And these, the more by distant lure cajoled,  
and truant more from him in field and wood,  
emptier of milk return they to the fold.
- 130 Some truly, boding evil likelihood,  
cleave closely to the Shepherd, but so few  
that scanty cloth would furnish every hood.
- 133 Now if my words not feeble are, if due  
hearing thou gavest them with mind entire,  
and if the memory call them up anew,
- 136 In part contented shall be thy desire,  
seeing the plant with scions torn away,  
and seeing what signifies the qualifer:
- 139 "Fair is the fattening, if they do not stray." ,

## NOTES

ll. 1-12. The *Aphorisms of Hippocrates* was the great text-book for medical students; at Montpellier, in the full tide of the Renaissance more than two centuries after Dante, Rabelais still had to study it. It is noticeable that Dante mentions the professions of law, medicine, priesthood, diplomacy, politics, and theft all in the same context. In some old MSS. the reference to the priesthood is erased! In *Convivio* iii. 11, he had said: 'He should not be called a true philosopher who is friend of wisdom merely for practical purposes (*per utilitatem*), as are lawyers, physicians, and almost all the professors of religion (*li religiosi*) who study not to know but to gain money or advancement.' *Acquistar moneta o dignità*: words that have the snap of a whip!

l. 16. St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor Angelicus.

ll. 25-6. Canto x, ll. 96, 114.

l. 26. Oxford text reads: *nacque*.

ll. 37-9. Francis is likened to 'the rapt seraph that adores and burns'; Dominic, preoccupied with doctrine, is 'a splendour of cherubic light'. St. Thomas Aquinas (who, it should be remembered, is the speaker) in his *Summa* defines *Seraphim* as by derivation signifying 'ardour of love' and *Cherubim* as so named for their knowledge.

ll. 43 ff. Assisi lies out on the mountainside facing westward toward Perugia, whose old southeast sungate (Porta Solē) lets in the reflected glare of summer heat and winter snow from Monte Subasio, a spur of Apennine rising behind Assisi to a height of more than four thousand feet. Between this mountain and the Roman Apennines to the east in the narrow valley lie shadowed Gualdo and Nocera washed by the Topino. This little river, whose course resembles that of upper Arno, flows southward until, escaping from the mountains and curving in a sharp elbow round Monte Subasio, it shapes its course northwestward to join the Tiber, but not until it has received the Chiascio flowing down from the hills about Gubbio, on one of which was the hermitage of St. Ubald. To those familiar with that district the Poet presents a picture. The map of Italy contains the materials of poetry in 'God's plenty'.

ll. 52-4. Assisi, supposed to be derived from 'Ascesi' (I rose); there is also allusion to Zacharias vi. 12 (*Vulgate*): 'Behold a man the Orient is his name' (Ecce vir *Oriens* nomen ejus).

*ll. 58 ff.* He loved the Lady Poverty, but the father opposed the match.

*l. 64.* The Lady's first husband was Christ.

*l. 68.* Caesar, in a crisis of his struggle with Pompey, being in need of a boat, knocks at night at the wretched hut of the poor fisherman, Amyclas, who was not in the least startled. Dante found the anecdote in the *Pharsalia* of Lucan (v. 515-31), and dwells upon it in the *Convivio*, iv. 13: 'The empty-handed traveller would sing in the very presence of robbers'—as indeed Francis is reported to have done.

*ll. 70-2.* This parable of the marriage with Lady Poverty, the central idea of Francis as it is the culminating point of the Canto, has been handled by modern textual critics and commentators with defective sympathy. The Italian *Testo Critico* of 1921 reads 'pianse in su la croce' (wept upon the cross). It is true that some of the best and oldest manuscripts so read, but equally true that the best early commentators read *salse* (mounted). Passing over weighty considerations in favour of what Dr. Edward Moore terms the bolder, and therefore more probable, metaphor, 'inounted', I have to call attention to the very words of the saint himself—words strangely overlooked by commentators—upon which Dante obviously bases the noble line: 'During thy passion she alone did not forsake Thee. Mary thy mother stopped at the foot of the cross, but Poverty mounted it with Thee and clasped Thee . . .' The whole wonderful prayer is given in the fine article, 'Francis of Assisi', in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition; in the later edition the prayer is omitted). The reader of that article will, indeed, find these notes hardly necessary.

*l. 93.* Sealed by the Church.

*l. 96.* Not merely thus related, but sung by the Seraphic choirs.

*l. 98.* Sealed by the Holy Spirit.

*ll. 106-8.* Sealed with the stigmata of the Crucified God. The seat of the order, founded by Francis on the rocky crest of La Verna, is a lovely place to which men of every faith can make devout pilgrimage.

*l. 118.* Judge of the worth of my master Dominic, worthy colleague of such a saint.

*l. 124.* Degenerate Dominican friars.

*ll. 138-9.* The qualifer is the subjoined clause, which has now been explained as promised. The line is repeated from x. 96.

## CANTO XII

*St. Bonaventura in praise of St. Dominic*

- 1 Before the final cadence ceased to sound  
forth from the blessed spirits radiant,  
began the holy millstone to whirl round,
- 4 But of full circling something yet did want,  
when now another ring around it fuses  
and matches dance with dancing, chant with chant,
- 7 Chant that as passing far excels our muses,  
our sirens, in those mellow flutings blew,  
as the first sunbeam by reflection loses.
- 10 As curve two bows the filmy cloud-rack through,  
both parallel in line and colour, done  
as Juno bids her maid the picture do,
- 13 The outer taking birth from the inner one  
in hues reëchoed like that wandering voice  
consumed by love, as vapour by the sun,
- 16 Giving mankind a signal to rejoice  
that what God promised Noah shall abide,  
whence deluge nevermore the world destroys.
- 19 So the two garlands bright about us plied  
of roses an eternal coronal,  
and the outer to the inner so replied.
- 22 Then, when the dance and lofty festival  
both of the flaming lights and of the quires  
light beside light jocund and blithesome, all
- 25 Of one accord grew quiet, song and fires  
(even as the eyelids cannot choose but shut  
or lift themselves again as will requires),
- 28 From one of the new lights a voice came out,  
which made me, needle to that pole, incline  
my body round toward its whereabout;
- 31 And it began: 'The Love that makes me shine  
prompts me to laud the other Leader great,  
for whose sake here is spoken fair of mine.'
- 34 Each with the other should be celebrate  
that, as united they were militant,  
their glory may together radiate.

- 37 The army of Christ, at cost exorbitant  
equipped anew, was moving slow of pace  
mistrustful, and too few the flag to plant,
- 40 When He who kings it over time and space  
provided for His knighthood jeopardied,  
not for their worth, but only of His Grace;
- 43 Coming, as said, to succour of His Bride  
with champions twain, whose prowess and behest  
rallied the stragglers who had turned aside.
- 46 Where first the winds breathe gently from the west  
to open the fresh foliage of spring,  
whence smiles Europa being newly dressed,
- 49 Not far from where the waves are thundering  
wherein the sun, because his course is great,  
somewhile from man concealed is slumbering,
- 52 There Calahorra sits, the fortunate,  
protected by the great escutcheon where  
the lion doth succumb and subjugate.
- 55 Therein was brought to birth the lover dear  
of Christian Faith, athlete in holiness,  
kind to his own, to enemies severe.
- 58 Such life-power in his mother did possess  
the infant spirit at its first creation  
as to transform her to a prophetess.
- 61 Fulfilled at holy font the declaration  
between him and the Faith, of sacrament  
wherein each pledged the other with salvation,
- 64 The woman who for him had given assent  
beheld the admirable fruit, in dream,  
of him and of his heirs; and with intent
- 67 That what he was he might in grammar seem,  
a spirit went bearing the possessive word  
of his Possessor hence to christen him,
- 70 And called him Dominic: for I record  
the story of the husbandman whom Christ  
chose for his aid in vineyard of the Lord.
- 73 True messenger he seemed and friend of Christ,  
for the first love obtaining masterdom  
in him, was the first counsel given by Christ.

- 76 His nurse discovered him, awake and dumb,  
many a time recumbent on the ground,  
as who should say, "To this end am I come!"
- 79 O thou, his father, Felix truly found!  
and thou, his mother, verily art Joan,  
if that interpretation be the sound.
- 82 Not as men now are spent for worldly boon  
following Thaddeus and the Ostian,  
but, loving the true manna, very soon
- 85 He grew a mighty teacher, and began  
about the vineyard to be vigilant,  
where bleach the vines if bad the husbandman;
- 88 And of the Seat that once to righteous want  
. benigner was (not by her own offence  
but that of her degenerate occupant!),
- 91 He begged,—not two or three for six dispense,  
not income of first vacant benefice,  
not tithes, of God's own poor the competence,—
- 94 But leave against the world, that goes amiss,  
to battle for the Faith, from seed whereof  
sprang twice twelve plants that garland thee with bliss.
- 97 Then, both with learning and with zealous love,  
by apostolical authority,  
like torrent urged by fountain up above,
- 100 Dashed in among the shoots of heresy,  
smiting with greater vehemence, the more  
resistance proved to be refractory.
- 103 From him thenceforward various runnels pour  
to irrigate the Catholic garden spot,  
making its bushes greener than before.
- 106 If such was one wheel of the Chariot  
wherein rode Holy Church for her defence  
over the field where civil strife was hot,
- 109 Clearly shouldst thou perceive the excellence  
of the other wheel, which Thomas had discussed  
before I came, with courteous eloquence.
- 112 But, where the outmost rim its pressure thrust,  
the track is now deserted by the wheel,  
so that there is the mould where was the crust.

464 *St. Bonaventura laments the Franciscan Decline*

- 115 His household, who set forth with footing leal  
upon his footprints, now are turned again  
so that they cast the toe upon the heel.
- 118 And soon the crop will prove, when gathered in,  
how bad the tillage when the tares will weep  
because they are excluded from the bin.
- 121 Yet any eyes that through our volume sweep  
leaf after leaf, will on some page have caught  
the legend still: "Unto my vow I keep."
- 124 But from Casale or Acquasparta not,  
whence come such as the writing so apply  
that one evades, the other draws it taut.
- 127 The effluence of Bonaventura am I,  
from Bagnorea, who did evermore  
put last the left-hand care in office high.
- 130 Here, of the earliest of the barefoot poor,  
Illuminato and Augustin, made dear  
to God while circled with the cord of yore.
- 133 Hugh of Saint Victor is among them here,  
and Peter Mangiadore, and Peter of Spain  
who in twelve books down there is shining clear,
- 136 The Prophet Nathan, Metropolitan  
Chrysostom, Anselm, that Donatus who  
stooped to the first art, a grammarian;
- 139 Here is Rabanus, here beside me too  
shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim,  
gifted with spirit of prophetic view.
- 142 In rivalry such paladin to hymn,  
moved me with courtesy-ekindled mood  
Friar Thomas, by the fair discourse of him,
- 145 And with me prompted all this brotherhood.'

## NOTES

*ll. 1-30.* Rising from the mood of depression incident to the conclusion of the preceding Canto, our Poet here soars up into 'the high reason of his fancies with his garlands and singing-robes about him'.

*l. 15.* When Love had sun-dried all the moisture of her body, Echo was mercifully transformed to a cliff about which her voice for ever wanders.

*l. 19.* The great Doctors of the Divine forming a double halo of circling and singing flames.

*l. 29.* The incidental reference to the magnetic needle gives proof that the mariner's compass was familiar to Italians of the thirteenth century.

*l. 31.* Speaks the Franciscan Doctor Seraphicus, St. Bonaventura, in praise of Dominic.

*ll. 35 ff.* The military imagery of these lines is certainly more in harmony with the character and methods of Dominic than with those of his far more Christ-like contemporary, Francis. But Dante deemed the deplorable corruption of the clergy to spring from laxity of doctrine; the Church required the support of the stern measures of Dominic. Although the latter seems a less poetic figure than Francis, it is significant that the Poet has lavished a greater wealth of fancy upon this Canto than upon its pendant. Here, as there, the reading of a brief sketch of the life of the hero may exempt the reader from being too frequently 'edified by the margent'.

*l. 53.* Royal arms of Castile.

*ll. 71-5.* No other word is permitted to rhyme with the name of Christ. Cf. the identical rhyme in xiv. 104; xix. 104; xxxii. 83. The first counsel was, 'sell that thou hast and give to the poor'. Matthew xix. 21.

*l. 83.* Authorities in medicine and canon law (the *Decretals*). Cf. opening passage of Canto xi.

*l. 90.* Boniface the Eighth.

*ll. 106 ff.* The two wheels of the Chariot of the Church (cf. *Purgatorio xxix.* 107). In the corresponding passage of the eulogy of Francis, St. Thomas uses the familiar symbol of Peter's bark.

*l. 114.* A violent shift of metaphor! Dante, like Shakespeare, often defies the rules of the rhetoricians. From the rim of the wheel to the hoop of the cask, then from the container to the contents—the wine with its mould instead of the preservative beeswing.

## Notes

ll. 115-27. Line 117 has been found 'very puzzling'. Yet the reader has only to imagine a man swinging his foot round to go back on his tracks. To one who follows the Poet's swiftly changing fancies the picture is vivid indeed. For the image of the tares and the good wheat in the following terzina, cf. Matthew xiii. 30.

ll. 124-6. Ubertino of Casale, leader of the 'spiritual' faction of the Franciscans, was so impracticably severe in interpreting the rule that he was finally driven from the order. Matthew of Acquasparta, cardinal bishop, general of the order, and confidential agent of Boniface VIII, went to the other extreme. He was papal legate at Florence at the very time when the office of prior was held by Dante, who had good reason to suspect the crafty churchman to be no very devoted lover of the Lady Poverty. The sting of the allusion lies in the implication that the cardinal evaded the rule for personal profit.

l. 129. In his administration of the Franciscan Order and as bishop, he subordinated the temporal to the spiritual; with allusion to Proverbs iii. 16: 'in her left hand riches and honour'.

ll. 130 ff. The other lights of the outer wreath of saints. For these names cf. Toynbee's *Concise Dictionary*.

## CANTO XIII

*Discourse of the Angelic Doctor set to Celestial Music*

- 1 Let him imagine, who would fain be shown  
what now I saw (and hold the image fast  
while I am speaking, carven as in stone!),
- 4 Fifteen stars that in various regions vast  
do make the heavens alive with lustre, serving  
to pierce the air, however overcast;
- 7 Imagine the great Wain whereto the curving  
vault of our heaven is so ample, night and morn,  
that from the veering tongue 'tis never swerving;
- 10 Imagine too the broad bell of that Horn  
beginning at the axle-hub, whereby  
the first revolving sphere is round us borne:
- 13 These to have made two clusters in the sky,  
like that which the daughter of Minos fashionèd  
when, chilled, she felt herself about to die,—
- 16 One cluster with the other garlanded  
and in such fashion whirling both the two  
that one was leader and the other led:
- 19 Then will he have some shadow of the true  
star clusters, as in counter-dance they gleam,  
circling the point that I was rooted to,
- 22 Since these outstrip the things we see or dream,  
as does that Heaven which is the swiftest o'er us  
the moving of Chiana's oozy stream.
- 25 Not Bacchus, not Apollo was their chorus,  
but Persons three in being all divine,  
in one, divine and human, to restore us.
- 28 The song and circle measured, turned in fine  
to us those holy lustres, more by token  
passing from heed to heed with joy benign.
- 31 'Mid those concordant powers was silence broken  
then by that light whence the achievements of  
the marvellous mendicant of God were spoken:
- 34 'One sheaf being thrashed,' the words fell from above,  
'and that its grain is to the garner gone,  
to beat the other beckons me dear love.'

*Two Modes of Creation*

468

- 37 Thou thinkest of the bosom whence was drawn  
    the rib wherewith to fashion the fair face  
    whose palate cost the world so dear a pawn,—  
40 And of that lance-pierced bosom, by whose grace  
    sin past and future was so compensated  
    that the atonement in the scale outweighs,—  
43 Thou thinkest man may be illuminated  
    by no more light than was infused in those  
    by that same Power who both of them created:  
46 And hence thy wonder when my story goes  
    that the Fifth Light with vision so profound  
    was gifted, that "No second ever rose".  
49 Open thine eyes now and behold how bound  
    is thy belief with what I shall reply,  
    both in the truth like centre in the round.  
52 That which can die, and that which cannot die,  
    are nothing save the splendour of that Word  
    in love begotten by our Father High;  
55 Because that Living Light which is transferred  
    so from its Source, it may not be undone  
    from it or from that Love which is their third,  
58 Its mirrored rays by its own benison  
    in nine subsistencies together brings,  
    itself eternally abiding One.  
61 Thence passes through successive lowerings  
    to the ultimate potential elements,  
    producing naught but brief contingent things;  
64 And these contingent things I take in sense  
    of generated things, in seedlessness  
    or seed produced, through heavenly influence.  
67 The wax of these things with the plastic stress  
    stands not at one,—its trace may be defined  
    beneath the ideal pattern, more and less.  
70 Whence comes about that, after its own kind,  
    the selfsame tree bears worse and better fruit,  
    and ye are born endowed with various mind.  
73 Now were the wax exactly worked to suit,  
    did stars supreme their influence assemble,  
    the lustre of the seal were absolute;

- 76 But Nature mars,—wherein she doth resemble  
the craftsman who about his labour goes  
and keeps the knack, although his fingers tremble.
- 79 Yet if the fervent Love seal and dispose  
clear insight of the Primal Power, achieved  
perfection on that substance fully shows.
- 82 Dust of the ground, made worthy thus, received  
full animal perfection once therethrough;  
thus wrought upon, the Virgin once conceived.
- 85 So that I give my sanction to thy view  
that human nature never yet has been,  
nor can be, such as in those persons two.
- 88 Now if no farther forward should I win,  
“How then consider him without a peer?”  
upon this question would thy words begin.
- 91 But to see clearly what is not yet clear,  
think who he was and why petitioning  
when he was bidden ask the guerdon dear.
- 94 Thus have I spoken but exhibiting  
that he was king, and asked for plenitude  
of wisdom to become a worthy king,—
- 97 Not for the number of the multitude  
moving these spheres, nor if *necessse* chained  
with a contingent ever could conclude,
- 100 Nor if prime motion is to be maintained,  
nor if in semicircle could be drawn  
triangle, save right angle be retained.
- 103 Whence, taking this with my discourse foregone,  
a kingly prudence is that peerless prize  
the shaft of my intention hits upon.
- 106 And if on “rose” thou turnst discerning eyes,  
thou wilt perceive that it is spoken of  
kings,—who are many, and but few the wise.
- 109 Thus qualified, in what I said above  
agreement with thy view is found complete  
as to our primal Sire and Him we love.
- 112 Let this be ever lead upon thy feet  
to make thee like a weary man move slow  
when *Yes* and *No* the inner vision cheat;

- 115 For he among the fools is very low  
    who affirms or who denies in either kind  
        without distinction of the *Yes* and *No*,
- 118 Since often to false bias are inclined  
    opinions men too hastily attain,  
        and mere conceit then trammels up the mind.
- 121 His putting forth from shore is worse than vain  
    who wanting skill goes fishing for the true,  
        since as he went returns he not again;
- 124 Melissus gives the proof of this to view,  
    and Bryson and Parmenides, who recked  
        not of their goal, however fast they flew.
- 127 So with Sabellius, Arius, and each sect  
    of fools who were as swords to Scripture pure,  
        distorting features otherwise correct.
- 130 Let folk in judgement never be too sure,  
    as when into the field the peasant goes  
        to reckon up the ears not yet mature;
- 133 For I have seen beneath the winter snows  
    the wild brier rugged seem, and troublesome,  
        and then upon its summit bear the rose;
- 136 And once I saw a gallant vessel come  
    straight over-seas, completing her emprise,  
        to perish entering the port at home.
- 139 Seeing one thieve, another sacrifice,  
    let not Dame Joan and Gaffer John presume  
        to penetrate them with divining eyes,
- 142 For one may rise, the other fall to doom.'

## NOTES

ll. 1-24. There are some who can never read this vast period (perhaps the longest in the Poem) without an upleap of heart. The mighty sweep of the twelve opening lines is in harmony with that of the northern heaven as visible to us on a clear calm night; the relative diffuseness is true to the impression made by those unsounded interspaces between the solemn stars.

l. 10. The Horn is the constellation of the Little Bear, the small end of the horn or trumpet being the pole-star. In Chapter XX of *Don Quixote*, Sancho refers to '*la boca de la Bocina*', 'the mouth of the buccina'; and Lope de Vega mentions '*el carro y la bocina*', 'the Wain and the Horn'.

ll. 13-18. The seven stars of the Dipper (Charles's Wain), the two at the mouth of that Horn which begins at the North Star, and fifteen stars of first magnitude are to be fancied as forming two concentric clusters, like the Crown of Ariadne, whirling together.

l. 24. See note about the Chiana, *Inferno* xxix.

ll. 34 ff. St. Thomas Aquinas now explains his attribution of highest wisdom to Solomon (x. 114).

ll. 37-48. Adam and Christ, both direct creations of the Divine, must have been superior in wisdom to Solomon. The words cited at end of l. 48 of the English version repeat the 'non surse il secondo' of Canto x, l. 114.

ll. 52 ff. 'A religious hymn breathing the sense of mystery that surrounds the Divine' (Torraca).

ll. 67-72. Whatever is produced by the 'plastic stress' of the moving heavens is compared to wax, and the comparison, developed into a continued metaphor, does duty as an argument. Every one who respected himself then had his signet; no document was valid without the seal; no amount of wit could rail the seal from off the bond. The peculiar relation of signet and wax lent the resultant metaphor such various significance that its frequent use in poetry became inevitable. In Shakespeare as in Dante it is common, though never commonplace.

ll. 73-8. As the creative idea, the seal, is handed down from sphere to sphere, it finds the wax less perfectly tempered to receive the impression, while the secondary creative powers (vaguely termed Nature) are like the skilful craftsman who cannot quite control the tremor of his hands. Natural products are all, it seems, subject to some flaw. Cf. the latter part of Canto viii.

*ll.* 91 ff. St. Thomas now 'distinguishes'. Cf. the beautiful story of the dream of Solomon at Gibeon, 1 Kings iii.

*ll.* 97-102. The four highest branches of knowledge, as taught at the University, were theology, logic, metaphysic, geometry. As examples of what Solomon might have asked, one problem is cited from each one of these sciences. The second question involves the logical problem whether in the syllogism a necessary premiss coupled with a contingent one can ever result in a necessary conclusion. Any such syllogism conceals a quibble.

*ll.* 103 ff. Solomon asked and got practical wisdom for his trade of king.

*l.* 106. Cf. *l.* 48 and note.

*ll.* 116-17. Here, as in *l.* 109 and in Canto xi, *l.* 27, Dante uses the words *distinction*, *distinguish* as technical terms of logic. The premisses must be sharply scrutinized before proceeding to any inference.

*ll.* 121-3. Here St. Thomas, possibly feeling that he has already been somewhat discursive, does not succeed in saying quite all that he means. Obviously, an unskilful fisherman may return as he went—that is empty-handed. Does not FitzGerald's Omar tell us that such was the case with his quest for the truth when he did eagerly frequent doctor and saint? But what our present saint has in mind is the converse danger of getting one's net encumbered with monsters of the speculative deep, such as the sharks of heresy.

*ll.* 124-31. Of the three Greek philosophers Aristotle had spoken with severity; the doctrines of the two Christian theologians had been condemned by councils of the Church; that seemed to Dante sufficient basis for using them as examples. It would be wrong in us, who live in an age enlightened by historical criticism, to treat the Poet as he treats these celebrated thinkers, else we might with some justice accuse him of the very fault he is condemning.

## CANTO XIV

*The Spiritual Body. Galaxy of the Cross in Mars*

- 1 From centre unto rim, or back about,  
vibrates the water in a rounded vase,  
as smitten from within or from without.
- 4 Into my mind came suddenly the case  
that here I moot, soon as the effluence  
of glorious Saint Thomas held his peace,
- 7 Because of likeness in the incidence  
of his discourse and that of Beatrice,  
whom it pleased after him thus to commence:
- 10 'This man has need (yet does not tell you this  
either by voice or thinking) to pursue  
another truth to where it rooted is.'
- 13 Inform him if the light which doth endue  
your substance with its blossom, will remain  
as now it is for evermore with you;
- 16 And if it shall remain with you, explain  
how ye can bear it and conserve your sight  
when ye shall be made visible again.'
- 19 Just as, impelled by urgance of delight,  
they who are wheeling in the dance as one,  
lift up the voice and make the movement light,
- 22 So at the prompt devoted orison  
the holy rings gave proof of rapture new,  
turning in wondrous choral unison.
- 25 Whoso laments our death down here, therethrough  
to win new life above, did never see  
refreshment there of the eternal dew.
- 28 That ever-living One and Two and Three  
reigning in Three Two One beyond all date,  
unbounded and all-bounding Trinity,
- 31 Did each among those spirits celebrate  
three times, with such melodious utterance  
as were fit meed for merit passing great.
- 34 And where divinest was the radiance  
of the inner ring, a quiet voice replies  
(to Mary such the Angel's voice perchance!):

- 37 'Long as the festival of Paradise  
 shall have continuance, so long our love  
 engarments us with such a radiant guise.
- 40 Its brightness will keep pace with movement of  
 our zeal, and zeal with vision, which is full  
 as it has grace its proper worth above.
- 43 When with the glorious holy flesh the soul  
 shall be reclothed, our personality  
 will dearer grow, since wholly beautiful.
- 46 Thereby will wax the light, that largess free  
 vouchsafed us by Supremest Excellence,  
 light which enables us His Face to see;
- 49 Wherefore the vision needs must wax intense,  
 the fervour wax that from the vision came,  
 and wax the radiance proceeding thence.
- 52 But even as a firebrand, darting flame,  
 is by its living glow victorious  
 so that its visible form remains the same,
- 55 So will this lustre now enswathing us  
 be vanquished by the flesh, that now from sight  
 this many a day by earth is covered thus.
- 58 Nor can we weary of so great a light;  
 strong shall the bodily organs be concerning  
 all that may minister to our delight.'
- 61 So ready and with such an eager burning  
 to cry 'Amen' appeared to me both quires,  
 as for the mortal body showed their yearning,
- 64 Not for themselves alone, but for their sires  
 and mothers and perchance for others dear  
 ere they became imperishable fires.
- 67 And lo! a lustre all around, of sheer  
 surpassing splendour dawned upon the view,  
 like an horizon that is growing clear.
- 70 And even as at early nightfall, new  
 gleamings begin to spot the sky again,  
 while true appears the vision, yet not true,
- 73 Methought up there, beginning to grow plain,  
 novel existences, a circling host  
 outside of those circumferences twain.

- 76 O very sparkling of the Holy Ghost,  
smiting mine eyes with such an instant flare  
they might not brook it, in the lustre lost!
- 79 But Beatrice showed so smiling and so fair,  
it must be left with visions that elude  
the memory, which cannot follow there.
- 82 Therefrom mine eyes, resuming aptitude  
to lift their lids, showed me with her alone  
lifted to loftier beatitude.
- 85 That I was lifted to a higher zone  
was told me by that star's enkindled smile  
which ruddily beyond the common shone.
- 88 In that deep language of the heart whose style  
is one in all, to God I here addressed  
oblation for the gift bestowed the while;
- 91 Nor yet was consummated in my breast  
the sacrifice, before I knew the prayer  
to be propitious and with favour blest,
- 94 For with a rubeate glory past compare  
showed splendours forth, within two rays of light,  
such that I cried: 'O Sun that makes them fair!'
- 97 As, 'twixt the two poles of the world, gleams white  
the Galaxy with less and greater stars,  
putting in doubt the very erudite,
- 100 Thus, constellated in the depth of Mars,  
fashioned those rays the venerated sign  
formed in a round by crossing quadrant bars.
- 103 Here conquers memory all wit of mine:  
because that Cross was lamping so with Christ  
I cannot find similitude condign;
- 106 But whoso takes his cross and follows Christ  
shall yet forgive me what I leave unsaid,  
seeing that dawnlight flashing with the Christ.
- 109 From arm to arm, and between base and head,  
lights were in motion, brightly scintillant,  
passing and counterchanging as they sped.
- 112 So swift and slow and level and aslant  
are seen here, ever altering their mien,  
the atomies of bodies long or scant

- 476      *The Melody gathering along the Cross*
- 115 Adance upon the ray that cleaves the screen  
      of shadow often, which for their defending  
      men cause by handicraft to intervene.
- 118 And, as the harp or violin, with blending  
      of many chords, sweet tinkling makes to him  
      who hears the music without comprehending,
- 121 So from the lights there shining bright or dim  
      gathered along the Cross a melody  
      that raptured me, oblivious of the hymn.
- 124 High laud it was,—so much was clear to me,  
      because 'Arise and conquer' was the strain  
      which still I heard uncomprehendingly.
- 127 So charmed was I therewith that until then  
      naught had there ever been that could impose  
      on me the fetters of so sweet a chain.
- 130 Perchance too bold appear such words as those,  
      disparaging the charm of those fair eyes  
      gazing wherein my longing has repose.
- 133 But whoso comprehends how as they rise  
      those living seals of every beauty augment,  
      nor had I turned to where their lustre lies,
- 136 May excuse me from the indictment I present  
      for my excuse, and find my truth the surer:  
      the holy bliss has here no banishment
- 139 Because, ascending, it becomes the purer.

## NOTES

ll. 1-87. The voice of Thomas had come from the rim; that Beatrice flows back from the centre.

l. 18. Torraca insists that 'visible' is here used in the sense of capable of seeing', to which Grandgent adds the explanation with bodily eyes'. But does that interpretation harmonize with the context? These 'sightless substances' (as Shakespeare might have called them) are made manifest to bodily eye of the Poet only by the brilliant light that flowers out of them. This and the voice are the 'accidents' of their 'substance'. The subconscious question that Beatrice perceives lurking in Dante's mind relates to the mystery of the assumption of the glorified body after the resurrection: how can bodily vision subsist unimpaired in the midst of such vivid splendour? It is

doubt attesting childlike faith. Whatever the reader's attitude toward such faith, it need not deprive him of the imaginative flexibility and reverence requisite to the enjoyment of the glorious burst of poetry to which the question leads. It may be well to note here that, with the exception of the shadowy faces in the Heaven of the Moon and perhaps of those in Mercury which come swimming like fish in pellucid water, Dante sees no bodily figures in Heaven until after his eyelids are drunk of the River of Light (Canto xxx, l. 88). Thereafter bodies are made visible to him such as all the blest are at last to receive. The glorified body may be conceived as the visible symbol of the eternalized human individual.

ll. 28-30. The chiastic structure, symbolic of the Cross, regnantly expresses the great mysteries of the triune God and the double nature of Christ.

ll. 34 ff. The light that speaks so modestly, in tones perhaps like those of the Seraph in making to Mary the tender annunciation, is that of the royal sage, Solomon. Cf. *Purgatorio* x. 34 ff. and *Paradiso* x. 109 ff.

ll. 61-6. In their supreme glory, so unimaginable that all his imagery of splendour is felt to come short, they still yearn for those features that stamp and identify the individual, linking him, amid the flux of things, to the humble and toilsome past, and this not so much for themselves as for those whom they loved:

'So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.'

*l.* 67. Here begins the transition into the higher sphere of Mars; at first the vision appears uncertain as when the straining eye catches and loses and catches again the first faint glimmering stars in the fading daylight. Then comes the sudden unmistakable sparkling from which his dazzled eyes take refuge in the unspeakable love radiated from the smile of Beatrice.

*l.* 79. The smile of Beatrice always marks the rise into a higher sphere.

*l.* 86. The ruddy Heaven of Mars.

*ll.* 97 ff. Imagine the 'Milky Way' in the form of a cross.

*l.* 104. For the time, cf. Canto xii, ll. 71, 73, 75.

*ll.* 112-17. The image of the Galaxy forming a cross is of sublime still splendour; the image of the motes dancing in the isolated sunbeam shot through a darkened chamber simply adds the notion of movement, and prepares the mind for the return to the starry splendour after the music pauses at the beginning of the next Canto.

*ll.* 122 ff. Hymn of the Warrior-Saints.

*l.* 130. Because the eyes of Beatrice reflect the divine (cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi, the closing strain).

*ll.* 136-7. In plain prose, as translated by Norton: 'May excuse me for that whereof I accuse myself in order to excuse myself, and may see that I speak truth'. In ll. 79-81 is described the smile of Beatrice at the moment of leaving the sphere of the sun. But in this new world the vision of the starry cross and the rapture of the heavenly hymn transcend in charm any previous experience; and not yet since arriving here has he turned to look into her eyes. The two lines of verbal legerdemain are certainly in strong contrast with the noble simplicity which rules this great Canto—they even set it off! Many commentators will have it that 'the living seals of every beauty' are the spheres, apparently failing to perceive that what the Poet is celebrating is the supreme loveliness of Beatrice; and what gives the quickening seal to beauty, if not the eye?

CANTO XV

*Cacciaguida recalls the Heroic Age of Florence*

- 1 Benignant will, distilling into blest  
love-breathing charities that never cease,  
as greed in wicked will is manifest,
- 4 Silence imposed on that sweet lyre, and peace  
upon those holy chords, which one by one  
the hand of Heaven doth tighten and release.
- 7 How can be deaf to righteous orison  
those Beings who, to open wide the door  
for my petition, paused in unison?
- 10 'Tis right he should eternally deplore  
who, out of love for what does not abide,  
forfeits that other love for evermore.
- 13 As through the pure and tranquil eventide  
a flash is seen from time to time to race,  
setting the calmest eyelids staring wide,
- 16 Appearing like a star that changes place,  
save that, where first enkindled is its light  
nothing is missed, and it goes out apace,—
- 19 So shot from the arm extending to the right  
to bottom of the cross, a star of them  
that make the constellation there so bright;
- 22 Downward it ran along the radiant stem  
like fire in alabaster shining through,  
nor from the fillet once broke forth the gem.
- 25 Such love the shade of old Anchises drew,  
if credit we our poet passing great,  
when in Elysium his son he knew.
- 28 'O kinsman mine! Grace incommensurate  
upon thee shed! to whom, as unto thee,  
was ever opened twice the Heavenly gate?'
- 31 So spake that light; whence thereto eagerly  
I turned,—then to my Lady,—in such wise  
that from both quarters awe came over me;
- 34 For such a smile was glowing in her eyes  
that, with mine own, methought I touched the bound  
both of my grace and of my Paradise.

*The Martial Spirit greets Dante*

- 37 Thereafter, blithe of look and blithe of sound,  
that soul to salutation added speech  
past my conception, it was so profound;
- 40 Of choice concealed he not what he would teach,  
but force perforce, because the lofty sense  
so overshot the mark of mortal reach.
- 43 But when the bow of burning love less tense  
became, and his discourse came down and stood  
upon the plane of our intelligence,
- 46 The first expression that I understood  
was: 'Benediction on Thee, Trine and One,  
for guerdoning my kinsman with such good!'
- 49 'A grateful and long fast,' he followed on,  
'from reading the Great Book where black on white  
is set down ineffaceably, my son,
- 52 Hast thou now satisfied within this light  
I hail thee from, thanks to her favour who  
clad thee with plumage for the lofty flight.
- 55 Thou deemest that thy thought to me flows through  
from the First Cause, even as from unity,  
if that be known, the five and six to you,
- 58 Not asking who I am, nor why in me  
appears a gratulation more elate  
than elsewhere in this jocund company.
- 61 Thou deemest true: in this life small and great  
are gazing in that Mirror whence, before  
thou thinkest, thy reflections emanate.
- 64 But that the Holy Love mine eyes adore  
in vigil never broken, hunger-spent  
with sweet desire, may be fulfilled the more,
- 67 O let thy voice, secure, glad, confident,  
for will and yearning find the fitting word  
whereto is predetermined my consent.'
- 70 Thereon I turned to Beatrice, who heard  
before I spake and gave assent, whereby  
the growing wings of my desire were stirred.
- 73 'When dawned on you the Prime Equality,  
love and intelligence for each of you  
became of equal poise,'—so answered I;

- 76 'Because the Sun that lit and warmed you through  
    holds in its heat and light such balance fit  
    that all comparison falls short of true.'
- 79 But mortal wing of will and wing of wit,  
    for reason well apparent to your sight,  
    fail of the balanced pinions requisite.
- 82 Whence I, who with the heart alone requite  
    thy dear paternal welcome, feel my lame  
    mortal disparity of will and might.
- 85 I do entreat thee, living topaz-flame,  
    set as a gem upon this jewel choice,  
    to satisfy my craving with thy name.'
- 88 'O leaf of mine, who made me even rejoice  
    expecting thee, thy root behold in me!'
- beginning thus, replied to me the voice;
- 91 Then said: 'That soul who gave thy family  
    the surname, and has round the Mountain gone  
    on the first terrace, a long century,
- 94 Was thy great-grandfather, and was my son:  
    befits that respite thou for him bespeak  
    from his long travail, with thy orison.
- 97 Florence, encircled by her wall antique,  
    whence tierce and nones are tolling evermore,  
    lived peaceable and temperate and meek.
- 100 Her arm no clasp, no crown her forehead bore,  
    no silken petticoat, with girdle gay  
    more tempting to the eye than she who wore.
- 103 Not yet did little daughter's birth dismay  
    the father; not too early did they mate,  
    nor yet was dowry ruinous to pay.
- 106 No house was then of children desolate;  
    not yet Sardanapalus came to show  
    what in a chamber he can perpetrate.
- 109 Not yet outflown was Monte Mario  
    by your Uccellatoio,—which as outflown  
    in soaring up, shall be in falling low.
- 112 I saw in belt of skin and clasp of bone  
    Bellincion Berti, and his lady quit  
    the mirror with complexion still her own;

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115 I saw the Nerli and the Vecchio fit  
the leathern jerkin with good countenance,  
with spindle and with flax their ladies sit.
- 118 O happy women! each yet in advance  
sure of her burial, and none beguiled  
of comfort in her bed because of France.
- 121 One, keeping watch above her cradled child,  
would soothe it with the babbling idiom  
whereto the fathers and the mothers smiled;
- 124 And one, the thread from distaff drawing home,  
gathered her brood and prattled fables how  
came Trojans to Fiesole and Rome.
- 127 A marvel then Cianghella's brazen brow,  
or Lapo Salterello, as complete  
as Cincinnatus and Cornelia now.
- 130 To life of citizen in house and street  
so fair and quiet, to so great a fame  
for neighbour loyalty, to home so sweet,
- 133 My mother gave me, calling Mary's name;  
and so, within your ancient Baptistry,  
Christian and Cacciaguida I became.
- 136 Moronto and Eliseo brothered me;  
my Lady came from Valley of the Po,  
whence was thy surname handed down to thee.
- 139 I followed Kaiser Conrad then, with so  
good service that he belted me a knight,  
so much my prowess made his favour grow.
- 142 Beneath his banner followed I to fight  
to pastors' shame, of what is yours by right.
- 145 There disentangled by those caitiffs foul  
was I from the delusive world, whose quest  
infatuate debases many a soul,
- 148 And came from martyrdom unto this rest.'

## NOTES

*ll. 1-12.* We learned in *Purgatorio* xviii, in the course of that philosophic conversation during the second night on the Mountain, that we are left perfectly free to direct our love either to the fashion of this world, which passeth away, or to the things that are abiding. It is the corner-stone of ethics. Those heavenly substances here give him example of benignant love by silencing the rapturous chords that had entranced him. Overwhelmed by the thought that this was done to facilitate his will to pray to them, the Poet exclaims that he well deserves his fate who, for love of perishable goods, robs himself of a love so considerate of our weakness:

‘And is there care in Heaven? And is there love  
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move?’

*ll. 13 ff.* The light of Dante’s greatest ancestor slips down the shaft of the mystic cross like a ‘shooting star’.

*ll. 28-30.* Cacciaguida begins speaking in Latin, then the universal tongue of Church, law, diplomacy, education. The greeting *sanguis meus* (kinsman mine) is taken from the *Aeneid*, vi. 835, where it is addressed to Julius Caesar by the ancestor of the Julian *gens*. Cf. also the meeting of Aeneas and Anchises, *Aeneid*, vi. 679 ff. Obviously, the question implies no exclusion of the case of St. Paul. Cf. *Inferno* ii. 13-33.

*ll. 34.* Here is the Poet’s vindication from the indictment brought against himself at the close of the last Canto.

*ll. 50 ff.* The Great Book in which he reads, the Mirror in which they gaze, are images of the Divine Mind.

*ll. 73-82.* The Divine Being is called the Prime Equality because having wisdom, power and love in equipoise. The blest are so imbued with His light (intelligence) and heat (love) that to do is as easy as to know what ‘twere good to do; thought and action are convertible. Dante here humbly urges his moral inadequacy to the form of action called for—that is, discourse with a being in whom performance duly follows on desire. Shakespeare has often given classic expression to our human disparity of will and deed.

‘The flighty purpose never is o’ertook  
Unless the deed go with it.’

*ll. 91-6.* So Dante comes honestly by that besetting sin of pride to which he confessed in the conversation with Sapia

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(*Purgatorio* xiii. 133-8). He did not meet his great-grandfather on that weary first cornice of the Mountain where pride is purged away. To have introduced his ancestor there would have rendered the present passage less artistically effective.

ll. 109-10. Hills from which travellers from the north got the first view, respectively, of Rome and of Florence.

ll. 112-17. Great citizens in their day (cf. *Inferno* xvi. 37, and next Canto).

ll. 120. Before Dante's time members of the great guilds were trafficking farther afield than France: in Bruges, London, Constantinople. The merchant or traveller who ventured so far seldom returned in the same year, if ever.

ll. 127-8. A woman of doubtful reputation, and a man whom Dante detested.

ll. 133 ff. Tireless research has disclosed little more of Dante's ancestry than can be inferred from these lines. For the invocation of Mary in childbirth, cf. *Purgatorio* xx. 19-24.

ll. 142 ff. Second Crusade, preached by St. Bernard (1147); heroic death in such a cause was accounted martyrdom.

## CANTO XVI

*Concerning forty worthy families of Florence*

- 1 O petty our nobility of blood!  
if thou prompt men to make their boast of thee  
down here, where faints our yearning for the good,
- 4 Never shall this seem wonderful to me,  
for where desire is not perverted, yea  
in Heaven itself, I felt such vanity.
- 7 In truth, thy cloak so quickly shrinks away,  
that, add we not a frequent piece thereto,  
time with the shears goes round it day by day.
- 10 With *You*, which Rome at first permitted, *You*,  
wherein her children now least persevere,  
proudly began I my discourse anew.
- 13 Whence Beatrice, a little distant here,  
by smiling called to mind that dame who coughed  
at first recorded fault of Guenevere.
- 16 'You are my Father,' so began I soft,  
'you fill me for discourse with courage high,  
you lift me far above myself aloft.'
- 19 So many rivulets are pouring joy  
into my heart that happy is my tongue  
seeing I can bear and not be rent thereby.
- 22 Tell then, beloved root whence I am sprung,  
who were your forebears, what the years foregone  
that signalized themselves when you were young.
- 25 Tell me about the sheepfold of Saint John,  
what were the numbers and who were the folk  
within it who the highest places won?'
- 28 As is by breathing of the wind awoke  
flame in a coal, so did I see that blaze  
kindle at the caressing words I spoke,
- 31 And growing ever fairer to my gaze,  
with sweeter accent gentlier it said,  
but in no dialect of nowadays:
- 34 'From the first *Ave* to that childing-bed  
whereon my mother, now ensainted, through  
delivering of me was comforted,

- 37 Five hundred times and fifty and thirty drew  
this circling fire to its own Lion apace,  
beneath his paw to kindle up anew.
- 40 My sires and I were native to that place  
where the last ward first intersects the course  
of the hot runner in your annual race.
- 43 Enough about my elders this perforce:  
for as to whence they came and who they were,  
silence is more becoming than discourse.
- 46 All those at that time competent to bear  
weapons, the Baptistry and Mars between,  
numbered a fifth of them now living there.
- 49 But the community, where intervene  
Campi, Certaldo, and Figline now,  
pure to the humblest artisan was seen.
- 52 O how much better let such neighbours plough  
around Galluzzo, and let your border lie  
at Trespiano, rather than allow
- 55 Their entrance, so to be offended by  
the stench of Aguglion, and Signa's clown,  
who has for jobbery so sharp an eye.
- 58 Were folk who most on earth have fallen down  
not stepmother to Caesar, but instead  
benignant, like true mother to her son,
- 61 One, made a Florentine by truck and trade,  
would have turned back to Semisonte again,  
where went about his grandsire begging bread.
- 64 Still would the Counts on Montemurlo reign,  
the Cerchi be in Aconè's parish still,  
perchance the Buondelmonte on Greve's plain.
- 67 When mingled populations overfill  
the city, evermore begins its woe,  
as added victual makes the body ill.
- 70 And the blind bullock falls more headlong low  
than the blind lamb, and more one sword will cleave,  
and often deeper than the five will go.
- 73 If Luni and Urbisaglia thou perceive,  
how they have gone, and likewise pass away  
Chiusi and Senigallia, to believe

- 76 That in like fashion families decay  
    will seem opinion neither strange nor new,  
    seeing that even cities have their day.
- 79 All your affairs are mortal, even as you,  
    the very brevity of life concealing  
    in some the creeping steps of death from view;
- 82 And as the lunar heaven, for ever wheeling,  
    covers and bares incessantly the shore,  
    so fickle Fortune is with Florence dealing.
- 85 Hence what I tell should seem no fable-lore  
    concerning the renownèd Florentines  
    whose fame through lapse of time is known no more.
- 88 I saw the Hugos, saw the Catellines,  
    Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, Alberichi there,  
    illustrious citizens in their declines,
- 91 And saw, as mighty as they ancient were,  
    with one of La Sannella, of Arca one,  
    Ardinghi and Bostichi and Soldanier.
- 94 Above the gateway newly weighed upon  
    by felony so heavy in its shame  
    that from the bark shall soon be jettison,
- 97 Dwelt then the Ravignani, from whom came  
    Count Guido down, and whoso to this hour  
    has taken lofty Bellincionè's name.
- 100 He of La Pressa wisely wielded power  
    already, and the Galigaio claimed  
    sword-hilt and pummel gilt in hall and bower.
- 103 Greatly the pale of Minever was famed,  
    Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, and Barucci,  
    and Galli,—and others by the bushel shamed.
- 106 The parent stock whence budded the Calfucci  
    was great already, and to curule chair  
    already drawn Sizii and Arrigucci.
- 109 Ah, mighty did I see them who despair  
    because of their own pride! and the Balls of Gold  
    in all her prowess made our Florence fair.
- 112 So likewise did the ancestors of old  
    of those who, when your see is vacant, find  
    fat profit by abiding in the fold.

- 115 That haughty breed, so dragon-fierce behind  
the fugitive, but let your teeth be seen  
or purse belike, seem lambs, they grow so kind,—
- 118 Was on the rise, although from people mean,—  
whence Ubertin Donato felt disgrace  
when his wife's father made them kith and kin.
- 121 Down from Fiesole to market-place  
had gone now Caponsacco,—Judah there  
and Insangato, burghers in good grace.
- 124 Incredible, yet true, what I declare:  
the little circuit had an entrance way  
called after them whose emblem is the Pear.
- 127 All wearers of the fair insignia  
of the great Peer, whose name and valour grim  
the feast of Thomas calls to mind to-day,
- 130 Knighthood received and privilege from him;  
though with the populace to-day unite  
that man who guards the scutcheon with a rim.
- 133 Gualterotti and Importuni were at height;  
and had they for new neighbours suffered dearth  
more tranquil would the Borgo be to-night.
- 136 The house from which your tears have had their birth,  
and with the blood of many stained the earth,  
because its just resentment killed your joyance
- 139 Was honoured in itself and its alliance:  
O Buondelmonte, by what evil daring  
didst flee at others' prompting its affiance!
- 142 Glad would be many who are now despairing,  
if God had to the Ema relegated  
thyself, when first toward the city faring.
- 145 But meet it was that Florence consecrated  
a victim, while her last peace was prevailing,  
to that bridge-warding marble mutilated.
- 148 With folk like these, nor yet were others failing,  
did I see Florence in such deep repose  
that she had no occasion yet for wailing;
- 151 I saw her people glorious with those,  
and just, so that the Lily never stood  
reversed upon the lances of her foes,
- 154 Nor dyed vermillion yet by party feud.'

## NOTES

*ll. 10 ff.* Dante addresses his ancestor as if he were royal ('you' instead of 'thou'). This use of the plural pronoun to a single person was then erroneously supposed to have been introduced in servile respect to Julius Caesar. But even at this day the people of Rome 'least persevere' in this usage. The smile of Beatrice at our Poet's besetting sin of pride, reminds him of the warning cough of the lady-in-waiting when Guenevere first betrayed her passion for Lancelot. For the *you, your*, instead of *thou (thy)*, cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi. 36; xxxiii. 92. Several other instances will be recalled by the reader of these notes.

*l. 25.* Modern Florence is the city of the Baptist, as the ancient was the city of Mars.

*l. 37.*  $580 \times 687 +$  (the number of our days required for the revolution of the planet Mars) gives about 1091 as the birth-year of Cacciaguida.

*ll. 46-8.* The city lay between the Church of St. John and the Ponte Vecchio with the mutilated statue of Mars. Populations were small in those days. Villani says that in 1300 Florence had 'more than 30,000 citizens capable of bearing arms'. London, in Shakespeare's time, three centuries later, had perhaps as many. If, however, we counted only those 'on fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed', the census to-day might seem less congested.

*ll. 49 ff.* Dante was as far as possible from being a 'booster' of a 'greater Florence'. He was so medieval as not to confuse greatness with bigness; nor did the movement from the farm to the city seem to him a wholesome social symptom. The reader will not look to this place for a local gazetteer. Longfellow fills thirteen pages with interesting notes to this Canto; it would be easy to fill a hundred. Dante's contemporary, the historian Villani, confirms and illustrates many of the Poet's allusions.

*ll. 58 ff.* That is to say, if the clergy had kept hands off. The Papal Curia had promoted the Guelf league against the Empire. Semifontë, a fief of the Empire, had been so effectually destroyed that its very name has perished from the countryside (a strange, unusual occurrence!). The destruction of the feudal strongholds, leaving the peasantry unprotected, caused a rush to the city.

*ll. 88 ff.* For biographical information and anecdote Toynbee's *Dictionary* is the obvious repertory. The reader will find profit in looking up Bellincion Berti and his daughter, the good Gualdrada (*Inferno* xvi. 37). The historical student soon

## Notes

perceives that the viewpoint in these Cantos is very much that of an old Tory. The new families, like the Cerchi, were often useful citizens. And the institution of the guilds is nowhere here referred to, although economically, politically, socially, even intellectually, of primary importance.

ll. 97-9. The Counts Guidi (cf. l. 61) descended through the good Guidrada from Bellincione (or Bellincion) Berti, of the ancient Ravignani family.

l. 105. The great family who 'blush for the bushel' has been already alluded to but not named. *Purgatorio* xii. 105.

ll. 112-14. Two great families owed their wealth to the reversionary right to the episcopal revenues between the death of a bishop and the appointment of a successor.

ll. 115-17. The Adimari, one of a successor. Dante's property after his exile, here get a stab where they would feel it most.

ll. 124-126. The marvel is that even a minor gate to the old city should have been named for a family so obscure as the della Pera, from whom had arisen the Bardis among the bankers and merchants of that age. The veracious chronicler, Giovanni Villani, qualifies his statement with a 'some say'; Giovanni Dante certainly had no such hesitation. Had he lived a little longer he might have seen in the decline of the fortune of the Peruzzi a striking instance in harmony with the tenor of this canto. The repudiation by English Edward III, in 1339, of his enormous debt to the Bardis and the Peruzzi brought about the fall of their great houses, which had branches in all the financial centres of Europe and the Levant.

ll. 127-32. Hugh of Brandenburg, Imperial Vicar of the Middle Ages. Davidsohn, the most serious financial crash of the Middle Ages. Giano della Bella, the stalwart families, from one of which came scutcheon was that of the great baron with the addition of a border of gold.

ll. 136 ff. The Amidei, whose murder of young Buondelmonte for slighting their alliance is the traditional origin of the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline.

ll. 132 ff. The old banner showed a white lily in a red field: the Guelfs reversed the colours. This Canto may remind the reader of Homer's catalogue of ships. Probably nowhere in any literature has so much history and tradition and sentiment and satire been packed into so little room.

## CANTO XVII

*Dante's Exile and Justification*

- 1 As who makes fathers chary of undue  
promise to children, questioned Clymenë  
if what he heard against himself was true,
- 4 Even such was I, and such perceived to be  
by Beatrice and by the Holy Lamp  
who previously had changed his place for me.
- 7 Then said my Lady to me: 'Do not damp  
the flame of thy desire, but let it soar  
well making manifest the inward stamp;
- 10 Not that thy words may make our knowledge more,  
but that thou mayst acquire the habitude  
to tell thy thirst that we for thee may pour.'
- 13 'Dear parent stock, raised to such altitude  
that, as to earthly minds is evident  
angle may two obtuse include,
- 16 Thus do contingent things before the event  
exist for thee, still gazing where take head  
all times together with the present blent;
- 19 While in the company of Virgil led  
up and along the spirit-healing slope  
and down throughout the region of the dead,
- 22 I heard discourses grievous in their scope  
touching the remnant of my life, although  
well squared against the blows of chance by hope:
- 25 Wherefore my will were well content to know  
what fortune is approaching to molest:  
for bolt foreshadowed strikes a lighter blow.'
- 28 So to that selfsame light that had addressed  
beforhand me, I said as willed to say  
by Beatrice, and mine own will confessed.
- 31 Not with blind riddles which in former day  
ensnared the credulous, ere yet was slain  
the Lamb of God who takes our sins away,
- 34 But with clear utterance and language plain  
that fatherly affection made reply,  
in his own smile withdrawn and shown again:

- 37 'Contingency, which is embounded by  
the volume of your matter, is beheld  
all pictured forth before the Eternal Eye,
- 40 Yet not thence of necessity compelled,  
more than the vessel down the current steering  
is by the mirror in the eye propelled.
- 43 Therefrom comes, even as comes upon the hearing  
sweet organ music, to my sight the course  
of time already now for thee preparing.
- 46 As through stepmother proof to all remorse  
Hippolytus from Athens fled of old,  
so out of Florence shalt thou go perforce.
- 49 Already this is willed and sought,—nay hold  
it good as done by him who schemes the plot  
where every day the Christ is bought and sold.
- 52 The wonted cry of blame will follow hot  
the party wronged; but vengeance yet will bring  
witness to Truth that shall the wage allot.
- 55 Thou shalt leave far behind thee everything  
most dearly loved: the sharpest barb is there  
that first the bow of banishment lets fling.
- 58 Thereby shalt thou make proof what bitter fare  
is bread of others, and how hard a road  
the going up and down another's stair.
- 61 Yet for thy shoulders the most crushing load  
will be companions witless and malign  
with whom thou hast to fall to such abode,
- 64 Who, graceless and ungrateful, will combine  
all furious against thee; but their own  
foreheads will soon be red for it, not thine.
- 67 Of their stupidity will proof be shown  
in what they do, till thou shalt find it best  
to have made a party by thyself alone.
- 70 Thy first asylum and first house of rest  
shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy  
who on the Ladder bears the Eagle blest,
- 73 Who will have so benignant heed for thee  
that of the doing and asking 'twixt you two  
first will be what is wonted last to be.

- 76 Beside him shalt thou see that hero who  
from this strong star received at birth such seal  
that his emprise will be renowned therethrough.
- 79 His tender age does not as yet reveal  
him to the people: only while are told  
nine childish years, these circles round him wheel;
- 82 But ere the Gascon pontiff have cajoled  
the lofty Henry, sparks of worth shall shoot,  
showing him careless both of toil and gold.
- 85 Fame of his glorious deeds so absolute  
shall grow, that foes shall not prove dominant  
enough to keep the tongues of people mute.
- 88 On him and on his favours do thou plant  
thy trust; through him shall many change degree,  
altering state, both rich and mendicant.
- 91 And bear thou written in thy memory  
of him, but tell it not,—and he revealed  
things past believing, even of those who see.
- 94 Then added: 'Son, these glosses may be sealed  
to what was told thee; snares are waiting thus  
behind few circles of the spheres concealed.'
- 97 Yet be not of thy neighbours envious,  
seeing thy future life will long outlast  
the forfeit of their deeds perfidious.'
- 100 Soon as that holy soul to silence passed,  
*showing the pattern it had woven above*  
the web whereof myself the warp had cast,
- 103 Did I begin like one misdoubting of  
his course, who craves advice from one of those  
that, seeing, do correctly will, and love:
- 106 'Well see I, Father, how my time of woes  
to deal me such a buffet spurs along  
as is the heavier when one heedless goes;
- 109 Whence it is good with foresight to be strong,  
that, though the dearest place bereft me be,  
I forfeit not the others by my song.
- 112 Down through the world embittered endlessly,  
and up the Mountain from whose lovely height  
my Lady with her eyes uplifted me,

- 115 And then throughout these heavens from light to ligh  
have I learnt what, retold by me, would reck  
with savour rank to many an appetite;
- 118 And if to Truth I prove a friend too meek,  
I fear the forfeiture of life with those  
who after us shall call this time antique.'
- 121 That light, which by its smiling did disclose  
my treasure-trove, then flashed out, coruscating  
as in the sun a golden mirror glows.
- 124 'A conscience clouded, whether contemplating  
its own shame or another's,' he replied,  
'will feel thy language veritably grating.
- 127 But none the less, put every lie aside,  
and make thy vision clearly manifested,  
letting them scratch who have an itching hide;
- 130 For, though thy word be grievous, barely tasted,  
it will at length become a vital food  
nutritious, so it be but well digested.
- 133 This cry of thine will be like tempest rude  
which buffets most the highest summits, so  
making approof of worthy fortitude.
- 136 Whence on the Mountain, in the Vale of woe,  
and in these wheeling Circles are revealed  
only the souls whom by renown we know;
- 139 Because the mind of him who hears is steeled  
to incredulity of argument  
rooted in cases covert and concealed,
- 142 Nor yields to proof that is not evident.'

## NOTES

*ll. 1-27.* It is the unfortunate result of Apollo's indulgence of Phaethon that is supposed to make fathers chary to children. Phaethon, proud of divine origin, having heard that the god was not in fact his father, put the question to his mother, Clymenë. Similarly Dante, having heard heavy tidings about himself from Farinata (*Inferno* x), Ser Brunetto (*Inferno* xv), Vanni Fucci (*Inferno* xxiv), Conrad Malaspina (*Purgatorio* viii), Oderisi (*Purgatorio* xi), now questions his great forebear who can see in God things contingent: those that, while future to us, are all present in eternity. There the future is as certain as the plainest mathematical proposition.

*ll. 37 ff.* A stock argument of the Christian schoolmen. While the events of Dante's life are foreseen, his will is left free.

‘If I foreknew,  
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.’

*Paradise Lost*, III. 117.

*ll. 46-54.* As the innocent Hippolytus was driven out of Athens by the false witness of a perfidious accuser, even so must Dante depart from Florence; indeed the plot is already schemed at Rome (apparently in April, 1300, before the priorate of Dante) and will soon be carried out by him who presides over the exchange where every day Christ is bought and sold (Boniface VIII, cf. the whole of *Inferno* xix). The vengeance may be indeterminate or it may refer to the outrage at Anagni (*Purgatorio* xx. 85 ff.).

*ll. 61-9.* We know only that Dante after his exile at the beginning of 1302 was a man of light and leading among the *fiorusciti* (*outs*), that their attempts to gain access to Florence by force were vain, and that he separated himself from the Whites. As to details reports are somewhat conflicting and conjectures more so.

*ll. 70 ff.* The *gran Lombardo*, to whose courtesy the exiled Poet first turned for refuge, is an elder brother of the famous Can Grande della Scala, who is separately referred to and eulogized. The word Scala (ladder) made the ladder their obvious punning device, and as imperial vicars they placed the eagle above the ladder on their crest. Dante was received at Verona by the Scaligers (ladder-bearers) during the minority of Can Grande, who succeeded to the lordship in 1312, at the age of twenty-one. The deception by the Gascon Pope Clement

V of Henry VII was at the time of that Emperor's coming to Italy in 1311. After the death of Henry in 1313, Dante hoped in Can Grande as a regenerator of Italy. He is probably the Hound of *Inferno* i. 101 ff. The best illustration of these lines is found in Rossetti's noble poem, 'Dante in Verona'.

ll. 101-2. Images from the textile industries, on which the prosperity of Florence was based, are not very common. Cf. Canto iii, ll. 95-6; *Purgatorio* xxxi. 96; *Inferno* xvii. 16-18.

ll. 106 ff. 'Whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow Truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth.' Dante understands this at least as well as Sir Walter Raleigh. But Dante feels still more the truth stated by Emerson with Dantean brevity: 'He who writes for himself writes to an eternal audience.' His boldness in affixing the brand to the powerful of his time is hardly equalled in the history of poetry or prophecy. And though the instances he gives are far from being for us modern ones, yet the withers of men now living are not unwrung where he strikes the probe.

l. 129. Dante's forebear, speaking with the forthright plainness of a simpler age, seems to teach by example that in moral diagnosis all squeamishness is out of place. To resent the occasional 'low' images of a lofty poet would be as foolish as to resent the studied harshness of phrasing that sometimes varies symphonic harmony. Cf. Canto xvi, l. 33.

l. 136 to end. Our Poet's fine dramatic instinct leads him to bring in all his personages in an apparently casual manner; here, however, he declares a distinct purpose in their selection. Some commentators endeavour to draw a distinction between those who are shown to him by Virgil or Beatrice and those others who are merely recognized by himself; but most of both these classes exemplify the melancholy reflections on the vanity of fame set down in *Purgatorio* xi, ll. 91-117. For example, how shadowy has grown the figure of that Folco (Folquet or Fulk) of Marseilles whose immortality is so confidently predicted (*Paradiso* ix, l. 40)! If Sordello is somewhat better remembered it is not because he was on earth distinguished, 'col nome che più dura e più onora' (*Purgatorio* xxi. 85); Folco was a poet too. It was Dante who set Browning on the track of Sordello, and it is to Dante that all but a few of the historical personages of the Poem owe the rescue of their names from oblivion. The eulogy of Can Grande della Scala, to whom the *Paradiso* was dedicated, is embedded in the very middle of this central Canto. This is thought to be a deliberate feature in the architecture of the Poem.

## CANTO XVIII

*The Mystic Symbol of Justice in the Temperate Star of Jove*

- 1 Now in his inward thought with joy replete  
    was that blest Mirror, and I savoured mine  
        by seasoning the bitter with the sweet;
- 4 And the Lady leading me to the Divine  
    said: 'Shift thy thought to see my link unbroken  
        with him who lightens every load malign.'
- 7 Thereat I turned to look at the fond token  
    of my Consoler, and what love I viewed  
        in the holy eyes is here perforce unspoken,
- 10 Partly that words would be misunderstood,  
    partly that memory is unreturning  
        if others guide not to such altitude.
- 13 This only can I tell that point concerning,  
    that, rebeholding her, my own affection  
        grew fetterless and free from other yearning.
- 16 While the Eternal Joy without deflection  
    rayed upon Beatrice, and mirror-wise  
        from her fair look appeased me by reflection,
- 19 Subduing me with light of smiling eyes,  
    'Turn round and hearken,' thus to me she said,  
        'not in mine eyes alone is Paradise!'
- 22 As sometimes in the visage here is read  
    the inclination, if of so much force  
        that the whole soul thereby is riveted,
- 25 So turning to my great progenitor's  
    sanctified radiance, the wish I found  
        yet somewhat further with me to discourse.
- 28 Then he began to speak: 'In this fifth round  
    branching the Tree that draws life from the crest  
        and fruits for aye, and never sheds a frond,
- 31 Are souls who, ere they came among the blest,  
    were in the world below of so great fame  
        could noble Muse no richer theme request.
- 34 Observe the arms o' the Cross, and those I name  
    will at the signal in such mode proceed  
        as in the cloud its fulminating flame.'

Transit from Mars to Jupiter

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- 37 I saw along the Cross a lustre speed  
at name of Joshua: to ear and eye  
the word did not anticipate the deed.
- 40 And at the name of Maccabaeus high  
another spiral whirling flashed amain,  
and that which whipped the top was holy joy.
- 43 Likewise for Roland and for Charlemagne  
did my enraptured gaze two lights pursue,  
as eye doth after flying falcon strain.
- 46 Afterward William drew, and Renouard drew,  
and great Duke Godfrey drew mine eye by fire  
along that Cross, and Robert Guiscard too.
- 49 Then mingling with the other lights, the Sire  
whose spirit had discoursed with me made known  
his artistry among the heavenly quire.
- 52 To my right hand I turned me at that tone,  
my duty to behold in Beatrice  
either by language or by gesture shown,
- 55 And all her past and recent wont by this  
her present look was vanquished, such a ray  
flashed from her eyes lit with exceeding bliss.
- 58 And as by greater comfort in essay  
of righteous doing, man becomes aware  
of virtue waxing in him day by day,
- 61 So, wheeling in a wider circle there,  
a heaven of more extended scope I knew,  
seeing that miracle become more fair.
- 64 For now a shift of colour met my view,  
as when a woman's countenance, oppressed  
with blushful shame, resumes its pallid hue,
- 67 Such, when I turned about was manifest  
dawning in the white star of temperance,  
the sixth that had received me to its breast.
- 70 I saw within that Jovial radiance  
the flying sparks of love that there abound  
shaping our language out before my glance.
- 73 As birds, rejoicing in their pasture ground,  
start up together from a river dell  
and gather in a flock, now long, now round,

- 76 So holy creatures in the lights that dwell,  
    were flitting and were chanting, fashioning  
        their flock to figures,—D and I and L.
- 79 First sang they, to their own notes fluttering,  
    then, having fashioned one or the other sign,  
        would hold their peace awhile and stay their wing.
- 82 O Pegaseä, glorifier divine  
    of human wits, their life to render long,  
        as towns and kingdoms they, by aid of thine,
- 85 Brighten me with thyself to tell in song  
    their shapes as I deciphered them in Heaven,  
        in these brief verses let thy breath be strong!
- 88 These then displayed themselves in five times seven  
    vowels and consonants: I noted down  
        the members as they seemed by utterance given.
- 91 DILIGITE JUSTITIAM, first noun  
    and verb of all the figure were encrolled,  
        QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM, followed on.
- 94 These in the M of the fifth word did hold  
    such settled order there, that Jupiter  
        seemed to be silver patterned out with gold.
- 97 And other lights I saw descending where  
    the apex of the M appeared their goal,  
        chanting, I think, the Good that draws them there.
- 100 Then, as by stirring of a burning coal  
    innumerable sparks are upward sped,  
        prophetic omens to the simple soul,
- 103 So thence thousands of lights seemed spirited  
    to mount aloft, some lower and some higher,  
        by their enkindling Sun distributed;
- 106 And lo! when settled into place each flier,  
    I saw an Eagle as to head and breast  
        delineated by that patterned fire.
- 109 He there who paints has none to guide, but best  
    guideth Himself, and from Him we divine  
        the secret of the moulding of the nest.
- 112 The other blessed flock, content to twine  
    a lily flower at first upon the M,  
        with a slight flutter filled out the design.

- 115 Sweet star, what jewels, and how many of them,  
informed me that our Justice is the birth  
of that sixth heaven whereof thou art the gem!
- 118 Wherefore I pray the Mind wherein thy worth  
and motion start, that He take note whence come  
the fumes that dim thy radiance on earth;
- 121 That he once more be wroth with all and some  
who buy and sell within the Temple-door  
built round with miracles and martyrdom.
- 124 O heavenly host on whom I gaze, implore  
for them who still are here on earth, each one  
misled by ill example! War of yore
- 127 Was waged by dint of sword, but now 'tis done  
merely withholding, now here, and now there,  
the bread the pitying Father grudges none.
- 130 But thou whose writ is only made to tear,  
reflect that Peter and Paul are living yet,  
who died for the vineyard thou art stripping bare.
- 133 Well mayst thou urge: 'I have my heart so set  
on that ascetic who in royal hall  
was danced into the martyr's coronet,
- 136 That I know not the fisherman nor Paul.'

## NOTES

*ll. 1-18.* The soul of Dante's ancestor is called a blest mirror as being a reflection of the Divine Wisdom, while the eyes of Beatrice are a reflection of the Divine Love. Here we should recall the sublime allegory set forth in *Purgatorio* xxxi. 121-6. Looking into her eyes his troubled thought is to give place to the peace which passeth all understanding.

*ll. 28-30.* The heavenly spheres are compared, collectively, to a tree in every way contrasting with trees on earth, in that it 'lives from the top', that it bears fruit always, and does not shed its leaves. Cf. Revelation xxii. 2.

*ll. 43-8.* These personages, known to our Poet through semilegendary history, and as heroes of the romances of chivalry, were either defenders of the Christian world against the Saracen, or Crusaders. Robert Guiscard was more or less directly an ally of the greatest of the popes (Gregory VII) in his epochal conflict with the Empire.

*l. 55.* The smile of Beatrice marking ascent to the Heaven of Jupiter.

*ll. 64 ff.* The transition from the rubeate glory of Mars to the silvered tones of Jove is as soft and silent as the paling of the blush on a fair cheek.

*ll. 82 ff.* 'Diva Pegaseä', nymph of the spring which burst from the mountain of Helicon at touch of the hoof of the flying horse: hence, 'divine (or heavenly) Muse'. The precise identity of the Muse is left to the reader's fancy. Urania, who represents the knowledge of the heavens, would perhaps be the most inspiring of the 'sacrosancte vergini', whom the Poet invokes at his most need. Compare especially the noble invocation in *Purgatorio* xxix. 37-42.

*ll. 91 ff.* 'Love Justice, you that are judges of the earth': first words of the book Wisdom, for which see the Catholic Bible, or *Vulgate*.

*ll. 97-129.* One must picture to the mind the medieval capital M resembling the outline of the human face, as observed in *Purgatorio* xxiii. 33, where the M is also a rhyme-word. This with slight calligraphic variation becomes the *fleur de lis* of France (or the heraldic lily of Florence), from the medial summit of which buds forth the head of the Eagle. The M symbolizes the *Monarchia* whereof Dante discoursed and dreamed; the union of this with the lily and the crowning of the

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